

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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GEORGE DU MAURIER AT THIRTY-THREE

By E. V. LUCAS

GEORGE LOUIS PALMELLA BUSSON DU MAURIER, the son of Louis Mathurin du Maurier, a glass-blower, and his wife, Ellen Clarke, granddaughter of the Mary Anne Clarke (1776-1852) who, as ex-mistress, quarrelled so notoriously with Frederick Duke of York, was born in Paris on March 6, 1834, and the present year therefore marks his centenary. Although born in Paris, and educated there and in Belgium, and all his life speaking French with fluency, he came to be English of the English and for many years one of the mainstays of the national humorous paper and the most vigilant critic of the modes and manners of his adopted land. How sound a Londoner he also was can be learned from the pages which follow, extracted from a diary, begun by him on his birthday in 1867 and carried on for a year, which passed into the possession of his second son, the late Sir Gerald du Maurier, who lent it to me for this article shortly before his sad and sudden death this spring.

And I may say at once that the diary appears with peculiar fitness in the pages of this honoured magazine, because round about the time that it covers du Maurier was one of the 'Cornhill's' most constant and valued artist contributors. In the privately-printed volume, 'The House of Smith Elder,' which the late editor, Mr. Leonard Huxley, prepared in 1923, is this passage: 'By far the most regular illustrator in the "Cornhill" was George du Maurier. His first contribution was a drawing for "The Cician Pirates," and another for "Sibyl's Disappointment" in 1863. Other single illustrations were "The Night before the Morrow" and "Joan of Arc." He illustrated Mrs. Gaskell's "Wives and Daughters" and all Mrs. Oliphant's stories, "My Neighbour Nelly," "Lady Denzil," "Mrs. Merriew's Fortune," "The Scientific Gentleman," "A Rose in June," and "Carita"; Mrs. Macquoid's "The Courtyard of the Ours d'Or"; "Against Time," "The Adventures of Harry Richmond," "The Story of the Plebiscite" (one); "Pearl and Emerald," "Zelda's Fortune," "Three Feathers," "The Hand of Ethelberta," "For Percival," "Mademoiselle de Mersac" and "No New Thing,"

"Washington Square," "Love the Debt," and for Lady Ritchie "Miss Williamson's Diary" and one drawing for "Sola."

Before quoting from the diary I should say that at the age of seventeen du Maurier was sent to University College in Gower Street to attend lectures on chemistry. That was in 1851. In 1854 he was considered sufficiently well grounded in this mystery to be established in a laboratory of his own in Barge Yard, Bucklersbury, with the purpose of assaying metals. When, however, in 1856, his father died, the young man, who had always been a facile caricaturist, decided to take up art as a profession and returned to Paris to enter the studio of a Swiss instructor named Marc Gabriel Gleyre, where among his companions were his lifelong friends Thomas A. Lamont, afterwards of the Royal Water Colour Society, and Edward J. Poynter, afterwards P.R.A., James McNeill Whistler, who was not quite so stable an ally, and, outside the studio, Thomas Armstrong, afterwards Director of the South Kensington Museum Art School. From Paris du Maurier passed on to Antwerp (where, while drawing, he suddenly lost for ever the use of one eye), and thence, in 1860, to London, which he never afterwards left, and where he quickly found work on the periodical 'Once a Week,' to which Millais, Keene, Houghton and Pinwell were contributors. In 1863, as we have seen, he began to draw for the 'Cornhill.' He first contributed to 'Punch' in October, 1860, with portraits of himself and Whistler in the drawing.

In 1863 he married Emma (called 'Pem' in the diary), the daughter of William Wightwick, and the young couple settled in rooms in Great Russell Street, next door to the British Museum, over one of Pears' Soap offices, and there they remained until the diary ends in 1868. In 1864, on the death of John Leech, du Maurier was promoted to the 'Punch' Table. On January 1 of the same year his first child, Beatriz, or Trixy (afterwards Mrs. Hoyer Millar), had been born; in 1865 came Guy (afterwards a distinguished soldier and the author of the play 'An Englishman's Home'), who was killed in the War in 1915; and in 1867 the third child, Sylvia Jocelyn (afterwards Mrs. Arthur Llewelyn Davies), made her appearance. Later than the period covered by the diary were born Marie Louise (afterwards Mrs. T. H. Coles) and Gerald, who became one of the most acceptable actors of our time. At the opening of the diary then, the family consisted of the father and mother, three children, Martha the cook and Jane the nurse.

Here is the first entry, to be prefaced by the statement that K. stands for Kiki (or Kicky), the familiar name by which all du Maurier's

friends knew him, derived from his infantile mispronunciation of the word 'mannekin' as applied to him by his nurse.

March 6, 1867. To-day I, K. du M., am the third of a century or nearly so—33.33300. It is also Ash Wednesday, and there has been an annular eclipse of the sun, and a *Punch* dinner. The missus (out of the proceeds of certain dealings with Mrs. Dowden) has presented me with this book, a lovely penholder and exquisite portable inkstand—I hope I may use them long for this purpose . . . General spirits to-day a good deal above zero.

March 13. In the afternoon & evening Pem read from Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*. Very interesting. From my experience with living artists I think I should have failed to get on with Blake. One or two of the designs seem to me very fine: the little figure of the coiled snake with the man writing, also the two back views with each a leg out & a lot of twirligigs all around the page. Many of the others appear to my rude mind simply idiotic & imbecile abominations—so much so that it riles me to think of their finding enthusiastic admirers. Either I'm an ass, or else 'un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire.' Probably the former. . . . Lots of stupid eye worry—*circa* zero.

March 16. Went to Adelphi to see *Lost in London*—rather slow piece. Old Stirling Coyne came into our box—also Clement Scott—walked home & met Tom Taylor, who walked with us as far as Covent Garden. . . . Think I should like to be a playwright and an actor likewise—think I could. Much eye worry to-day.

'*Lost in London*' was by Watts Phillips. Joseph Stirling Coyne (1803-68) was a busy dramatic author, one of whose plays was called 'Box & Cox Married & Settled.' He had been among the original contributors to '*Punch*' and was one of its founders. Clement Scott, who in 1867 was nearing twenty-six and died in 1904, was later in the year to become engaged to du Maurier's sister Isabel. At that time he was, by day, a clerk in the War Office, and in the evenings dramatic critic for the '*Weekly Dispatch*' and for '*Fun*.' Tom Taylor (1817-80) was the dramatist, art critic, member of the '*Punch*' staff and a close friend of du Maurier, whose editor he became in 1874. We shall shortly see that du Maurier, who had a charming light tenor voice and for a while, after his father's death, meditated a professional musical career, was to have his theatrical ambitions to a certain extent granted.

March 17. Got up in great spirits, cold being better—felt quite conceited and crowed to Pem like a young cock—told her I could be a good actor if I chose & all sorts of things, and she never

contradicted me, like a good dear. . . . To dine at Little Holland House—nobody but the family, F. Leighton & Lord Somers. Very pleasant & genial. Watts ill & didn't dine. Mrs. Prinsep told all the Watts-Terry story to Pem—as how he was married a little against his will, & being married couldn't bear it at all &c. &c. &c. Mrs. P. wonderfully kind & genial. Saw some of Watts' work. Portrait of Joachim *splendid*. Leighton very chatty & a great swell. Lord Somers still more chatty, but fortunately not so swell. Val quite quiet. Dear old Prinsep getting very old. Pem more than ever smitten with the house & its adornings, and also with Mrs. P. who tells her she is prettier every time she goes there. . . .

Little Holland House was the Kensington home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thoby Prinsep, with whom the artist G. F. Watts (1817–1904) resided, painting in a studio in the garden. Sir Frederic (afterwards Lord) Leighton (1830–96) lived next door. Mrs. Prinsep had been a Miss Patile. Val, the artist, was her son. Watts, at the age of forty-seven, had, in 1864, married Ellen Terry at the age of sixteen, but they parted in 1865 and in 1877 Watts obtained a divorce. Joachim was Joseph Joachim the great violinist. Leighton at that time was thirty-seven, and it might be recorded here that Thackeray, meeting him in Rome, in 1852, wrote to Millais: 'I have met a versatile young dog who will run you hard for the presidency [of the R.A.] one day.' As it happened, Millais succeeded Leighton in that post forty-four years later.

March 18. After dinner T. A. came in in a very bad temper—had just scratched out the head in his picture. Discussion as usual about P R B's—their sense of humour, &c.—went at him hammer and tongs and had the best of the argument to my mind; also as usual. Pem quite riled with him for his narrowness, the dear old chap. . . .

T. A. was Thomas Armstrong (1832–1911), du Maurier's Paris friend, a figure painter who later succeeded their mutual friend, E. J. Poynter, as Art Director at the South Kensington Museum. Du Maurier used certain of his characteristics for Taffy in 'Trilby,' deriving others from Val Prinsep. The P R B's were the Pre-Raphaelite painters—at that time chiefly Holman Hunt and Madox Brown.

March 19. Pem read from *Haydon's Autobiography*, with which we were deeply interested; the subject being so much *à notre porter*. Poor Haydon! praying to God for talent, more earnest & industrious than any man I know, drawing his 8 hours a day from the Elgin Marbles, trying to unite with the splendour of Greek form the colour of Titian & the grace of purity of Raphael and what not! *Cui bono?* One little grain of the sense of humour would

have been of more use to him than all his piety as far as his success in this world was concerned. . . . I've found out that I can't be improving much in my art, *mes petits bons hommes & bonnes femmes*, that I'm paid so well for—two hours a day to work is not much, and the eye worry distracts me from much thought on Art, and encourages me to think of other possible fields for bread winning in which the eye is not an indispensable implement.

Although it was in 1867 that du Maurier expressed this anxiety about the future, it was not until 1891 that he took any steps, when he composed a lecture on social satire which he delivered with no little success, later still to turn to novel writing. The edition of 'Haydon's Autobiography' was that prepared by Tom Taylor.

March 20. Then to *Punch* dinner—everybody there except Burnand & Bennett—very jolly indeed—clacked like Mrs. Gamp—always enjoy myself when I talk a lot—then home—found Martha had been to see *Faust*, that Maman Bellemère had been here & had games with Trixy. Pem says I'm tight. I ain't. Very much over zero to-night—Ooray!

Francis Cowley Burnand (1836–1917), author of 'Happy Thoughts,' joined the 'Punch' staff in 1863 and became editor of the paper in 1880.

March 21. Went to T. A. & he and I called on Pinwell, No. 52 Adelaide Road, Hampstead. Found him in his little studio painting at a water-colour—two dressmakers in black, mother & daughter, reduced circumstances; daughter smelling a flower. The figures were very nice—rather *ad captandum* subject. Saw some of his illustrations, which I admired very much—often awkward in composition & with little beauty of face &c.—but lovely feeling for landscape & colour in white & black, and quite without vulgarity. Strange that he should not educate himself more; when a man can't say 'an angel,' let him boldly say 'a hangel,' but not 'a angel' as Pinwell does. . . . In the evening, Haydon; more fascinated than ever with this delightful book; think I should have loved him had I known him—poor fellow! what pluck, energy, earnestness, and how well he wrote.

George John Pinwell (1842–75), water-colour painter and illustrator, was one of the most gifted of the staff of 'Once a Week,' but throughout his brief life was in poor health and circumstances. Some of his most charming work may be seen at the Tate Gallery. With regard to his uncultivated manner of speech, a story is told that, wishing to corroborate a studio statement, he clinched the matter by saying 'Why, 'oughton and me seen him do it.'

March 26. At 10 T. A. came in; we laughed very much over this week's number of *Happy Thoughts* (hunting scene)—Lovely day, mild and windy—spirits much over zero.

March 28. Home to dinner & then to concert at St. James's Hall. Joachim the prince of violinists—was never so struck with that fact before. We sat just under him—lovely concert altogether—saw Lehmann, Dicky Doyle, ineffable Leighton, &c. Little Arthur Sullivan came and asked if I would do *Cox & Box* for charity. I said yes.

The great Joseph Joachim was then thirty-six. Lehmann was Rudolf Lehmann (1819–1905), the artist, father of Liza Lehmann, the composer, and uncle of 'Rudie' Lehmann, later to be a rowing enthusiast and a great figure on 'Punch.' Dicky Doyle (1824–83) was the 'Punch' artist and the designer of the present cover, who had, however, severed his connection with the paper in 1850. Little Arthur Sullivan, afterwards Sir Arthur and the associate of W. S. Gilbert, was then nearly twenty-five, and was chiefly known by his music for 'The Tempest' and as a professor at the Royal Academy of Music and the Crystal Palace School of Art. 'Cox & Box' was a new version by Burnand of the old farce 'Box & Cox' by J. Maddison Morton, to which Sullivan had put an accompaniment. We shall see more of it shortly.

March 29. After lunch went to T. A. and sat behind him as he was painting Miss Kingdon's lovely profile. Suggested many little alterations which were of great use. Next to painting oneself nothing is jollier than putting a finger in another fellow's pie. . . .

March 30. In fourwheeler, with Deutsch, to Arthur Lewis's, which was fuller than ever I'd seen it. Had lots of pleasant chats, with Marks, Moscheles, T. Taylor, Charles Dickens, Marochetti, &c. &c. &c. How delightful these evenings are—every one is so friendly and such enjoyment. After supper H. Power & I did the *Deux Aveugles*, which went off very well. Indeed we got an encore in the first duet for the first time—this is the fifth time we had done the D.A. and it is always liked. H. P. got his face up hideously, and a roar of laughter greeted his appearance; I did nothing to my face, but wore the blouse, white bags & father-in-law hat. . . . Came home not at all tight but very late. Much above zero of course. Everybody says I'm getting fat. Tom Taylor, Calderon & I bragged of the sayings of our little girls, à l'envie l'un de l'autre—great fun.

Deutsch, who is often mentioned merely by name, was one of du

Maurier's unusual friends: Emmanuel Oscar Mennhem Deutsch (1829-73), a Semitic scholar and theologian. Arthur Lewis, who lived at Moray Lodge on Campden Hill, was a very popular host in those days. His wife, whom he married shortly after this time, was Kate Terry, sister of Ellen. Marks would be Henry Stacy Marks, afterwards R.A., who painted birds and had been at Gleyre's with du Maurier. Philip H. Calderon, afterwards R.A., was also a fellow-student there. Moscheles was Felix Moscheles, the artist, a fellow-student in Antwerp, who later was to write a book about those days called 'With du Maurier in Bohemia' (1897). Charles Dickens was not the novelist but his eldest son. Baron Carlo Marochetti was the Italian sculptor who made the statue of Richard Cœur de Lion outside the House of Lords. He died later in the year. Harold, or Hal, Power was a well-known Bohemian, and 'Les Deux Aveugles' was a duologue for two blind soldiers with music by Offenbach.

March 31. Then called on the Silvers, who were out; I however insisted on going into the hall to look at the sketch I gave poor John Leech the day before he died more than 2 years ago. . . . Spirits much over zero to-day, in spite of the wretched eyes.

Henry Silver was a member of the 'Punch' staff, who bequeathed to the paper a very interesting diary. It was he who, when du Maurier complained of people calling him 'de,' replied that they ought to give the Devil his du.

April 1. Thence to the Zoo. Ought to go there oftener—should like to write fables of the Zoo & illustrate them. Happy Thought! . . . Sperrits pretty good in spite of eye worry as usual. Have taken to stout instead of Burgundy—have had six months' trial of the latter; it wrought me no good. Many happy returns of the Day, Mrs. D. M., lying so snug in bed—altho it's Tuesday morning now.

*April 2. After lunch went to see Poynter & Miss Solomon; met Swinburne coming out, looking ghastly. Poynter very jolly & his picture getting on. He hopes to get it done in time. The left side in the picture is awfully crude, especially the white draperies. Went up to chat with Miss Solomon, who has made me yearn for Rome & Florence. Her pictures are rather mild. Saw three heads by Simeon, which I did not like. He makes his noses an inch across the bridge now, and they look vacant & foolish. . . . After dinner, nap; after nap, Pem read *The Scarlet Letter*; delightful, though we'd both read it before.*

Miss Rebecca Solomon was the sister of the unfortunate Simeon

Solomon (1840-1905), a weak derivative of the *Pre-Raphaelites*. Her older brother was Abraham Solomon, an artist well known in his day. Algernon Charles Swinburne, in 1867, was thirty; his '*Poems and Ballads*' having appeared in 1866, he was at the top of his first phase of fame. Du Maurier may have met him through Whistler.

April 3. Yesterday morning poor Bennett died. He had been ill for some time. The *Punch* dinner to-day has been put off in consequence. . . . I fancy that in writing this I make my sperrits better than they have really been, because a pint of stout and a couple of glasses of Pommard (one for to-night) or something else in the malt or vine kind, have preceded the writing of the day's events.

[Here follows a little drawing of a happy man.]

Charles Henry Bennett (1829-67), who was always delicate, did less work than his admirers could wish. His strong suit was animals. In addition to his drawings for '*Punch*' he was known by his illustrations to the '*Pilgrim's Progress*.'

April 4. Mark Lemon came at lunch time—Talked a great deal, of course, of poor Bennett, whose family must be left badly off. He has been to Arthur Lewis about some private theatricals to be performed for their benefit—The *Morays & Cox & Box*. He says he can get the *Adelphi* for nothing—I am of course agreeable—It's strange how comfortable we got talking of this over Duff Gordon's sherry & a cigar. Poor Bennett! We also talked of his successor. *Le roi est mort, vive le roi!*—We both agreed that Grisct was the man. . . . After these, finished *Scarlet Letter*, which excited us both very much—felt I should like to write it all over again, from an anti-transcendental point of view—Sperrits pretty good.

Mark Lemon (1809-70) was the editor of '*Punch*' and had been so since its start in 1841. No mean actor, he 'could play *Falstaff* without stuffing.' The *Morays* were the *Moray Minstrels*, an amateur singing society, who met at Arthur Lewis's. Ernest Grisct, an English black-and-white artist of French extraction, then working on '*Fun*,' for a while supplied comic or grotesque animal drawings for '*Punch*'; but he was never on the staff.

Hereafter for many days the diary records rehearsals of '*Cox & Box*' at various places, sometimes with all the company, and once, at any rate, with Mrs. du Maurier playing *Sergeant Bouncer*, and once doubling that part with Cox. On this occasion the audience consisted of one, 'and that a legitimate wife.'

April 5. After dinner went with Pem to Seymour Haden's. Felix Moscheles, Jimmy Whistler, &c—musical evening. Mrs. Haden played more exquisitely than ever—She is decidedly one of my very greatest pets.

Sir Francis Seymour Haden (1818-1910) was a surgeon who developed genius as an etcher. His wife was Whistler's half-sister.

April 6. George Leslie told me old Landseer had been gushing about me, saying I was an improvement on Leech, &c. &c. . . . After dinner, nap, Trixy & Elia's *Essays*, which we found slightly stodgy. . . .

George Dunlop Leslie, afterwards R.A., was the landscape painter. Sir Edwin Landseer, the animal painter, was then sixty-five and long past his prime, although it was after this, in a brief period of renewed strength, that he designed the Trafalgar Square lions.

April 7. After lunch went to T. A. Found Hare fresh from his laurels of last night in *Caste*—nice little fellow.

This was John Hare (or Fairs, as his real name was), afterwards Sir John, who was then twenty-three. 'Caste' was one of the famous plays by T. W. Robertson, brother of Dame Madge Kendal, who, I am glad to say, is still with us.

April 8. [Show Monday.] Then to Millais; he was out; his brother was showman; and here was the great fetch and I don't wonder at it. Jephtha's daughter and the little girl asleep took the hearts of our party by storm. The missus said that under favourable circumstances she could almost have wept at J.'s daughter; the great big knife that was going to cut off her head was close to the father's chair, the females were being sent out of the tent, preparatory to execution; Daddy Jephtha (painted from Colonel Lindsay) is very splendid, and Miss J. is very touching; altogether it is to me simply splendid, and my old love for Millais & the old prestige have been powerfully awakened; that exquisite little girl asleep did also conciliate our warmest sympathies; who can charm like Millais? Such a natural hearty human charm. . . .

I always thought and do now that Mrs. Fortescue, without being particularly clever or accomplished, is the most sympathetic woman I ever met; if I had robbed a church, I should tell her of it in five minutes. . . .

After dinner (at home & alone) Charles Lamb; Roast Pig & the drunkard very jolly; must try & avoid drink & smoke & be a good boy; but as for sucking pig, could never endure it but for the sage and onions. . . .

In 1867 John Everett Millais was thirty-eight and his Pre-

Raphaelite period was over. He had been elected R.A. in 1863 and was now living in Cromwell Place, South Kensington, and working more for the engravers as an illustrator than with his brush. Jephtha and his daughter were painted from Colonel Lindsay and Miss Russel. The 'little girl asleep' was the picture called 'Sleeping,' painted from his daughter Alice (afterwards Mrs. Stuart-Wortley). Millais' brother William was an artist of not the highest ability and a singer.

Mrs. Fortescue I do not identify.

It is odd that anyone should find jollity in Lamb's 'Confessions of a Drunkard.'

Wednesday, (or rather Thursday for it's nearly 1.) To Morris & Co. for Paperhangings—chose two, the Pomegranate & the yellow. . . . Morris quite civil in spite of the Legend of Camelot. . . .

William Morris (1834-96), poet, decorator, and social reformer, had been burlesqued by du Maurier, with pen and pencil, in 'Punch,' in 1866. Morris, who was born a month before du Maurier, died three days after him.

April 11. Home, for Pem to put on her swell black skirt and then to Mrs. Millais at home, which was very gorgeous. . . . Hallé played, Millais & Miss Crampton sang, & four Morays—They wanted me to sing but I had brought no music and felt nervous about accompanying myself. . . .

Hallé was Carl, afterwards Sir Charles, Hallé (1819-95), the German pianist and conductor who became a British subject and did much for music in London. Later he married the violinist Madame Norman Neruda. His son C. E. Hallé was a painter and secretary of the Grosvenor Gallery.

*April 12. To Dr. Smith's, to a lexyographic dinner. When the Ladies retired, I, the Albino German Jew wine merchant Marx, & Shirley [Brooks] wanted to smoke, & Dr. S. is an inveterate smoker; so no doubt were the others, anyhow they must have been accustomed to smoke—As for Pem & Mrs. Shirley, they are steeped in smoke, and as for Mrs. Smith & the girls, they are accustomed to common tobacco in foul black pipes; yet the Dr. objected because we should have to join the ladies, and if this isn't downright damnable philistinism, who's Griffiths? But as Dr. S. is now editor of the *Quarterly*, Shirley behaved himself under the infliction—S. & I joined the ladies, and dear old Mrs. S. sympathised with our bereavement, & sent us into the boy's room where we found Herbert fast asleep. We had no cigars but we had a few whiffs from old pipes—we left early; I asked for a cigar & got it; in future I shall take my own smoking materials—that is if I'm asked again. . . .*

Sir William Smith (1813-93) was the author of the well-known classical dictionary and the 'Dictionary of the Bible.'

I suppose it is necessary to explain the phrase 'Who's Griffiths?' Griffiths was a maker of safes, and his advertisements, which were ubiquitous in those days, began with the question 'Who's Griffiths?' the answer being 'The Safe Man.'

April 14. Aidé called; told us of row between Jimmy Whistler and Legros last Friday, in which Legros was knocked down by a blow in the eye, but plucked out some of Jimmie's hair; *c'est gentil!* . . .

Aidé was Charles Hamilton Aidé (1826-1906), a society man of universal talent, who knew everyone during his bland, accomplished career.

Alphonse Legros (1837-1911), the French painter, who became a British subject and who latterly was the head of the Slade School, was, in 1867, teacher of etching at the South Kensington School of Art. All that I can find in 'The Life of James McNeill Whistler,' by Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell, concerning this occurrence is the following sentence: 'It was at this time too, (1867) that Whistler had a difference with Legros. . . . Friends tried to reconcile them, and only succeeded in spreading the report of the difference.'

April 15. In a hansom to Burne-Jones, to see his pictures—The Dorothy quite different from what I had expected, and I was rather disappointed; the two Cupid & Psyche's exquisite, splendid in colour, splendid in composition—one Psyche with *such* an exquisite face! Also saw his studies, and an oil picture begun for Birket Foster. B. J. is undoubtedly a very great man, and a very charming fellow into the bargain, and whenever I see him I am all the more smitten with these two facts. . . . (Saw the bard in a hansom with two black eyes—he affected not to see us.)

Edward Burne-Jones, afterwards Sir (1833-98), the Pre-Raphaelite painter, had just moved to the Grange, North End Road, his London home for the rest of his life. The Dorothy was a water-colour of St. Dorothea. Du Maurier's admiration and affection for Burne-Jones may be illustrated by a letter which he wrote to him many years later, in 1893, after visiting an exhibition of the great romantic artist:

My dear Burne-Jones, I went yesterday to the New Gallery. It was a peculiar sensation of pleasure—*très doux et un peu triste*—like opening an old diary. I knew all or very nearly all the pictures there, remembering well where and when I had seen them, and with what impressions. It reminded me of Millais' show at the Grosvenor Gallery, where you were so enthusiastic—do you recollect? We

went down Bond Street afterwards in a fourwheeler together and you nearly stamped through the floor!

And later, when Burne-Jones became a baronet, du Maurier wrote:

I think your special glamour (the Burne-Jonesiness of Burne-Jones, if I may coin such a word), the gift you always had among others of so strangely impressing the imagination and ever after haunting the memory, was almost as fully developed then (when I was young and tender,) as in the later work of greater scope where you had reached your full mastery of execution and draughtsmanship and design—which you seem to have reached so soon.

I fear that by 'the bard' is meant Swinburne, who, by the way, had dedicated his 'Poems & Ballads' to Burne-Jones.

April 16. In the evening H. Melville's *Omoo*, which is very exciting—spirrits good.

April 17. Nelly's wedding—Emma, Isabel & I went there in great finery; Emma with a dress of her mother's, hideous but rich looking & well suited to the occasion. Went to the synagogue in Margaret Street—crowds—service very impressive, but did not feel much moved; old Levy cried & so did old Phillips—kept our hats on, which felt very strange—music—all the improper parts of the service in Hebrew. As Pem observed, 'Baruch' was all very well, but 'Shallaballah' was not a word to say before ladies. Having a brougham, we went to show ourselves in the Park before breakfast; nobody saw us. . . .

I have not been able to identify the Jewish wedding; but I assume that the Levy family was that which afterwards took the name of Lawson and later entered the peerage under the title of Burnham.

April 20. Muscular Christianity fit that always comes over me in spring—doing dumb-bells with bedroom chairs.

April 25. Then to Bouverie St. [the *Punch* Office] to the printing room, to see a printer my own size; found one, begged him to send his integuments to-morrow afternoon—which he kindly promised to do; so that anyhow Box shall be correct as far as costume is concerned.

In preparation for the trial performance of 'Cox & Box' for the C. H. Bennett charity, in which du Maurier was to play Box, the journeyman printer.

April 26. After dinner, with carpet bag containing printer's integuments, in a hansom to Arthur Lewis—Crammed full—Mark Lemon selling Bennett stalls like wildfire—After supper we did *Cox & Box*—I very nervous; couldn't do the funny business, but

did the singing all right. Altogether very successful, but one or two people were rather cold in their applause after—T. Taylor especially. We shall have to do it much better at the Adelphi.

April 30. (At Lyndhurst.) Cigarette in garden with Hamilton—late to bed. Whenever I think of it it seems awful to be away from those kids—it's a positive alienation & Pem feels it more than I do. Sperrits so so.

This entry was written in the New Forest, where du Maurier and his wife were staying with Hamilton Aidē, the children being in another house.

May 1. Rose late—Pem's foot better—jolly breakfast—jolly loafing on the lawn—lovely weather—kids came & larked—jolly lunch—jolly drive to Lymington—took up Allingham whom I like immensely.

William Allingham (1824–89), the Irish poet and friend of Rossetti.

May 3. Delightful day. . . . I began a sketch of that dear old Mrs. Aidē, but not very successful. Then reclined in the garden and Hamilton read some of Allingham's poems, which were very good. . . . Afterwards recited my ballad of blunders, which we much liked & laughed at. Then croquet. . . . Then to see the dear kids, so rosy & tired & happy they looked. . . .

The 'Ballad of Blunders' was du Maurier's parody of the 'Ballad of Burdens' in Swinburne's 'Poems & Ballads'—'This is the end of every man's desire.' It appeared in 'Punch,' with an illustration, in the number for December 1, 1866, and was signed 'Chatouillard.' It is here reprinted for the first time:

A BALLAD OF BLUNDERS.

The Blunder of Short Garments. Thou shalt wear

Thy supple thighs in sheaths of splendid fit,
Much use whereof shall surely render bare

The mystery, yea, the very threads of it;

And cold shall seize thee standing; should'st thou sit,
Thy skin shall vex thee with its tenderness;

Or stoop, thy perilous underseam shall split;

This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Gay Seasons. Strange delight;

Thy seething garb shall cleave to thee, and cling;

Thy red wet palm shall reek beneath the white;

And fierce black shining leather bite and sting,

A future of sore troubles gathering ;
 The dawn shall send thee, cold and comfortless,
 Creeping along the kerb, an abject thing.
 This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Much Music. Sit thee down,
 Nay, stop thine ears, and sleep. For verily,
 She that is playing heedeth not thy frown,
 And she that singeth takes no thought for thee ;
 And song shall follow song till thou shalt be
 Smitten and bitten with fierce restlessness
 To bite and smite in turn, or turn to flee ;
 This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Great Banquets. Out of sight,
 Beyond the reach of hands that heal for gain,
 The dish of thy desire, and thy delight
 Shall vex thy sleep ! Thou shalt behold again
 The Lord Knight Mayor, thy host, as King of Pain ;
 And lo, the worthy Lady Mayoress
 As Queen of Pleasure in thy heart shall reign ;
 This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Long Speeches. Thou shalt burn
 To see men whisper, and thy voice grow thick,
 And shame shall stain thee red and white by turn,
 And all thy wine shall rise and make thee sick ;
 And short swift sobs shall take thy breath betw-hic !
 And in thy skull shall be much emptiness,
 And in thy stead, the likeness of a stick.
 This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Late Hours. Leave thy sad bed ;
 See what strange things shall grieve thy straining sight :
 Stray broken glass to greet the dawn ; grey dead
 Strewn ashes of the weeds of thy delight ;
 Sick sterile leavings of the hot fierce night ;
 Yet must thou bend thee to thy business
 Thy brain to brood ; thy tremulous hand to write ;
 This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Strong Spirits ; warm and sweet,
 Or cold without, and pale ; whereof to tread
 The wild wet ways is perilous to thy feet,
 And in thine eyes, where green was, lo, the red ;

And where thy sinew, soft weak fat instead ;
Burning of heart and much uneasiness

About thy girth, and aching in thine head ;
This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Much Rhyming. If thou write
That once again that should be once for all,
These market-men will buy thy black and white
Till thy keen swift full fervent ways shall fall
On sated ears ; thy stinging sweetness pall ;
And barren memories of thy bright success
Shall burst in thee the bladder of thy gall ;
This is the end of every man's excess.

The Blunder of Long Ballads. Bide in peace ;
For when the night is near, the day shall die,
And when the day shall dawn the night shall cease,
And all things have an end of all ; and I
An end of this, for that my lips are dry,
And th'leventh hour's exceeding heaviness
Doth overweigh mine eyelid on mine eye. . . .
This is the end of every man's excess.

MORAL.

Poets, who tread the fast and flowerful way,
Heed well the burden these sad rhymes impress ;
Pleasure is first, and then the time to pay ;
This is the end of every man's excess.

May 3. Hamilton & I smoked in the garden and afterwards had a tremendous long chat—I am beginning to feel a very warm friendship for Hamilton ; a more sincere affectionate and unselfish fellow doesn't exist, and he is a thorough gentleman (hateful word to describe a jolly thing).

May 4. Then drove to Queen's Bower [? Corner], lovely place, to find Allingham reading under an oak *As You Like It*. . . . Great discussion on the plurality of worlds. H. A. read Browning to me.

May 5. Smoked about the lawn after breakfast—then to church—I in choir with H. A.—admired B. Jones' splendid window—was much disappointed in Leighton's virgins.

The present Lyndhurst church was built in 1863 and among its

decorations is a mural painting of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins by Leighton, at the east end of the chancel, and a window in the South Transept by Burne-Jones and William Morris.

May 9. Then to dinner at Henry Thompson's. Weldon, Cordy Jeaffreson, Shirley Brooks, Tom Taylor, Arthur Lewis, Hepworth Dixon, some literary brother of Lord Carnarvon, &c. &c. Stunning food and on the whole pleasant enough. Companion home Cordy Jeaffreson, whom I like.

The host was Sir Henry Thompson (1820-1904), the surgeon, a famous Amphitryon and an amateur writer under the pseudonym 'Pen Oliver'; but on this occasion he had more guests than usual, the perfect company in his opinion being eight: hence his 'Octaves.' Cordy Jeaffreson (1831-1901) was a busy literary man, best known for his challenging biographies of Byron and Shelley. William Hepworth Dixon (1821-79) was the historian and at that time editor of the 'Athenæum.'

May 11. Memorable day of our great performance—Slept all right with a cold water compress round my throat—also gargled with ginger essence from Davenport's—then got myself up in my Sunday best & went at 12 to Lunch with Mark Lemon & family in Bedford St., leaving my family to take care of themselves. At 12.30 went to the Adelphi with M. L. We were the first; presently T. Taylor arrived; went out with him & smoked; felt more fidgetty than nervous. Tenniel arrived—& gradually all the company—felt behind the scenes as if all the *boutique* were going to tumble on my head—dressed in the greenroom in company with most of the *Punch* staff—took a glass of stout; felt my voice all right.

In an incredibly short time the theatre had filled without our hearing anything, and almost before I was aware of it Arthur Blunt as Bouncer was singing his *aria d'entrata* in *Cox and Box*. I saw Emma & Isabel in an opposite box through the door.

My cue: 'protuberant bolster as this,' went on anyhow; terrible moment when I was left by Bouncer & had to do the candle & gridiron business, and sing the Lullaby; much applause—all the theatre was of course a mist as I did not wear my glasses, but recognised E. Levy's bald head in the front row, and thought of it during the second verse (suppose I'd said 'Hushaby, Levy!').

Then Twiss sang his song very well—then I flung his chop out of window and we managed the duet 'Who are you, sir,' very well—recovered all my self-possession. The second duet got an encore—The grand scena went off all right & so did 'Sixes'; I watching

Arthur Sullivan for my cues—Triumphant finish. Blunt was splendid in 'rataplan'—Twiss a regular old stager.

Redonned my Sunday best and went to Pem's box; then to Hamilton Aidé, who was with George Smith & his wife; then to Old Lady, with Maman Bellemère & Sophy Rockingham. All civil & in fact most flattering—all this time Moray Minstrels singing, Shirley speaking his address, and *Sheep in Wolf's Clothing*, in which Kate Terry, Mark Lemon & Burnand were admirable in their different ways; then went again behind to dress for Giraffier in 'Deux Aveugles.' Hare wanted to paint my nose red; wouldn't let him—as soon as the other piece was over we rattled thro' ours; Power delightful as usual—the whole thing was I think a success; 650£ in the house, & everybody pleased.

Bouncer's military song 'Rataplan' was the first lyric in the little play and it also brings it to an end. Box's Lullaby is the second, the chorus being:

'Hush-a-bye, bacon,
On the coal top.
Till I awaken
There you will stop.'

By 'Sixes' du Maurier means the dice-throwing scene where Box and Cox are throwing for the hand of Penelope Ann.

Shirley Brooks's address had reference to the distress of the Bennett family. 'A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing' was by Tom Taylor, and in it were the author himself, Mark Lemon, Tenniel, Burnand, Horace Mayhew, Henry Silver, Shirley Brooks (all of 'Punch'), Miss Kate Terry, Miss Florence Terry and Miss Ellen Terry (Mrs. Watts). After 'Les Deux Aveugles' came a farce by John Oxenford called 'A Family Failing,' in which Arthur (Cecil) Blunt, Mark Lemon, Tom Taylor, Henry Silver and Miss Ellen Terry appeared: a very generous afternoon's performance.

Twiss was Horace Twiss, and the Old Lady du Maurier's mother.

In a photograph of the company (with two or three exceptions, including Hal Power) which is reproduced in Mr. M. H. Spielmann's 'History of "Punch"' du Maurier in his costume as Stanislas Giraffier is seated holding his ankles, on the floor, between Ellen and Kate Terry, and oddly enough he has a curious resemblance to Whistler, partly the effect of a curl escaping from his cap.

... While I was at work Shirley came in & chatted for nearly 2 hours; at lunch tapped a bottle of Hock that he might drink with us the health of Guy du Maurier, who has just reached or rather finished his second year in this wale of tears. . . . After dinner

tried Darwin's Voyage round the World, which I revelled in as a lad 15 years ago—found it didn't excite us—then read Froude's splendid essay on the science of history, which excited us very much; after which, & stout, talk of aspirations towards the infinite. Pem said these were not much in her line & that she managed very well without them, but still sympathised very much with my longings in that direction; it is fortunate these don't on the whole interfere with my business. *Bonsoir*; I go to bed yearning for the infinite, and wishing Guy many happy returns of the day. . . .

Darwin's book was the 'Zoology of the Voyage of the "Beagle," published first in 1840.

May 15. Down to Crawley with *Punch* on the Brighton Coach. . . . All the staff except T. T., P. M. and F. C. B. . . . Arrived at Crawley at 3 something: went to Mark Lemon's, the man of many daughters & very nice daughters too. . . . Then dinner at the George. T. T., Ponny Mayhew & Agnew arrived. Jolly dinner. T. T. bragged of his wife's musical compositions and said that he had no doubt she could be prevailed upon to allow her music to be performed in public for Bennett's widow, or something to that effect; which is dooced considerate. Later, when we parted from Mark, I, in shaking hands, told him that Mrs. du Maurier would kindly compose some little thing and that for such a good cause she might be prevailed upon &c. &c. Unfortunately T. T. was saying good-bye to Mark at the same time—and being on my left side I never perceived him!

Mark Lemon's daughters were seven in all, one of whom had married Robert Romer, a barrister, afterwards a Lord Justice of Appeal. The proprietor of 'Punch,' who was present, became later Sir William Agnew.

May 20. Pem read Brewster's '*More worlds than one*,' which excited me very much.

May 21. To Prince of Wales to see *Caste*, with Isabel. *Caste* delightful—pipéd mine eye. . . . Accompanied Hare to his residence (in company with Gilbert, Twiss, Blunt, & some other fellow). Introduced to Mrs. Hare, in whom I recognised a lady I & Pem fell desperately in love with at Artemus Ward's six months ago, and took her husband on that occasion for a younger brother—she is most beautiful—and has dethroned Miss Spartal from my heart.

Gilbert, I imagine, was W. S. Gilbert, afterwards Sullivan's collaborator. Mrs. John Hare was a Miss Adela Holmes. It is a pity that du Maurier had kept no diary in 1866, so that we might have his first-hand impressions of Artemus Ward's lecture at the Egyptian Hall.

May 25. 'Lady Vargrave (in *Lucile*) kneeling at her pure snowy bed, from Miss Elbro [his most constant model]. P.S. bed from imagination and a very shaky piece of furniture it is. . . . Mrs. Haden in great tribulation about the row between her husband and Jimmy Whistler; I could give neither help nor advice. Dear Mrs. Haden, how nice she is.

In the same 'Life of Whistler' to which I have referred, there is this passage under 1867: 'Then Haden, back in London, resigned his post as honorary surgeon to South Kensington Museum, printed a pamphlet to explain and threatened to resign from the Burlington Fine Arts Club, of which both he and Whistler were members, unless Whistler was expelled.' This trouble was the sequel to a fracas in Paris in which Whistler and Haden were engaged subsequent to the death and burial of Traer, Haden's etching-assistant and a member of the British Jury on the French International Exhibition of 1867. Haden, however, did not let his objections to his brother-in-law's conduct influence his artistic judgment. Some years later, when asked which he would give up, could he keep the work of only one etcher, Rembrandt or Whistler—he replied Rembrandt.

May 28. What a delightful, easy-going, refined, sensitive, pipe smoking bohemian old Mason is. Pem quite in love with him. . . . Then Pem read out of *Cornhill Mag.* an exquisite tale of Miss Thackeray's—*Beauty & the Beast*—I would recognise her anywhere, a paragraph is enough. Simple, tender, rather sad, with such a sense of landscape beauty, and sympathy *que j'en suis tout ému, quoi*; and so is Pem, with an 'e' mute for grammar.

Mason was George Heming Mason (1818-72), the landscape painter, who had been Leighton's closest friend when they were in Rome together. There are three of his pictures at the Tate.

May 29. With Pem to dine at Millais at 8—Palgrave Simpson, Charles Reade, Dicky Doyle, the Wallacks, &c.—Sat next to Mrs. Martin the gusher, & Chas. Reade. Rather slow evening—altho' the charm of boyish freshness about J. E. M. attracts me so much—he likes my performances on wood immensely, apparently. Mrs. Millais very woman of the world, Mrs. Worldly Wiseman. Alice Gray sweet girl. Millais showed me his 'Rosalind & Celia' in progress—had a long talk with him about copyrights. After 12 Sullivan came in & we sang the concertina duet in *Cox & Box*—left very late—dear Trixy won't go to sleep and dawn is not very far off—heigho, yawning!

John Palgrave Simpson (1807-87) was the dramatist who adapted 'A Scrap of Paper' from Sardou. Charles Reade (1814-84), the

novelist, was then rehearsing his version of Tennyson's 'Dora' at the Adelphi. It was his story 'The Cloister and the Hearth,' under the title 'A Good Fight,' illustrated by Charles Keene, which had turned the corner for 'Once a Week.' I can't say who the Wallacks were—but relatives, of course, of James William Wallack, the American doctor who had married Millais's sister and died in 1864. Mrs. Millais, née Euphemia, or Effie, Gray, had been Mrs. Ruskin. Alice Gray, her sister, became Mrs. Stibbard, and at that time she was sitting for one of the figures in 'Rosalind and Celia.'

June 1. Pem & I hansomed it in great swelldom of attire to Greenwich to dine with George Smith of the *Pall Mall* &c. Got there at 4.45—did the picture gallery and the park & clomb the mound—then to the Trafalgeum. We were the first arrivals—7—and didn't dine till nearly 8—I sat between Miss Thackeray and Fred Locker. Pem between George Smith & Chas. Collins, whose wife carried on no end with Herman Merivale—Minnie Thackeray & her beau Leicester Stephens were there—22 people in all.

George Smith was the publisher—Smith & Elder—who established the 'Cornhill Magazine' for Thackeray and later founded the 'Dictionary of National Biography.' At that time he owned the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' which he gave later to his son-in-law, Henry Yates-Thompson. Frederick Locker, afterwards Locker-Lampson, was the author of 'London Lyrics,' and Herman Merivale was the dramatist. Charles Collins, brother of Wilkie Collins, was Dickens's son-in-law, having married Kate, afterwards Mrs. Perugini. Miss Thackeray, who in 1867 had written 'The Village on the Cliff,' married, ten years later, Richmond Ritchie. Thackeray's younger daughter Harriet Marian, called Minnie, married Leslie Stephen, here miscalled Leicester Stephens, the first editor of 'The Dictionary of National Biography.' The Trafalgeum was the Trafalgar Hotel, one of the famous Greenwich dining places.

June 4. I went to walk in the park like a gentleman; two or three people took me for one—saw a horse with the staggers—very interesting. . . . Music no end. . . .

June 6. Pem was disgusted because the widow who drove us home put her pretty feet up on my seat. Pem doesn't like forward women.

June 8. This day at 6 o'clock eleven years ago my father died at 44 Wharton St. Pem, Trixy and I in a hansom to see his grave; I have not been near it since I saw him lowered into it; it was too late to get the number from the office, and as there is no stone

we could not find it. This year I intend to carry out my intention of having a stone or monument put up—

What lots of things have happened since he died to me, tho' not so much to the rest of the family—I have gone through more mental anxiety than he probably ever had in all his life, tho' it was such a chequered and unsuccessful one: lost an eye, succeeded so far in life. Pem whom he took such a liking to as a little girl is now the mother of his 3 grandchildren—Isabel 28 and still unmarried, tho' we have hopes—Mamma well & hearty. . . . Hope to go again this week, & settle about the monument.

June 9. After tea read the first volume of *Mr. & Mrs. Falconbridge*, interesting to us on account of the author; for it seemeth weak & commonplace. Dear Hamilton's heart is better than his head, that is, his head for musical, literary, poetical, & artistic compositions; for his social head is very good with lots of sense and excellent feeling; but one must be very strong to lead the life that he does, and have led the life he has led, to do anything strong or original.

June 10. Went to club at 7. Millais, Val Prinsep, & Hamilton Aidē dined with me there. Very delightful dinner—more I see Millais, more I like him—he's as honest as the day—Val rather chaffed Hamilton—H. went away to opera after dinner—then we all went & played pool. I lost my 3 lives in an incredibly short period by missing the ball I aimed at & not hitting any other.

June 14. . . . Pem & I in hansom to Abney Park cemetery; found dear old daddy's grave at last, near a beautiful white rose tree—the sexton & Mr. Millward's agent came with us. The grave was a mere mound with some mown grass lying over it; 11 years ago (& a day) I stood there with Mr. Christopher Cattell to see my father put in, and have never been since—I went abroad for 4 years—& when I came back I had a disinclination to go. The whole appearance of the place is genial, or anyhow appeared so to-day—the place where one rests is entirely such a matter of sentiment & fancy to the relations—First Mr. Sexton gave Pem a white Rose, then Mr. Millward's agent. Then the agent & we walked round the cemetery to choose a stone. I fixed on one which pleased me much—and gave an order to have it executed—I fancy I shall often go there now; all unpleasantness is gone and with all my fondness for Daddy's memory I can speak of it quite facetiously. . . .

June 15. I strongly suspect Martha of pulling this diary open & reading it—If she does, and this happens to meet her eye, I hope she will discontinue so base & dishonest a practice. . . . Then home to dinner—after which Houghton called & smoked a

pipe. He is suffering much worry from his one eye ; I am altogether well off compared to him, poor fellow, three kids, no wife, and uphill work to succeed.

Houghton was Arthur Boyd Houghton (1836-75), the black-and-white artist, probably best known by his illustrations to the 'Arabian Nights.'

June 17. Put in the bedroom furniture to the last of *Lucile*. No. 24. Epoch in my life.

June 18. Mrs. Bennett, & little Sylvia sat for an ugly kid, which she isn't.

Mrs. Bennett was a professional model, not the widow of the 'Punch' artist.

June 21. Then home to tea & with Isabel to see *Dora*, in which Kate Terry was most charming—we pope our eyes most woefully—never cried so much in my life.

'Dora' was Charles Reade's version of Tennyson's poem.

June 23. To Little Holland House—large gathering on the lawn: the Hallés, Mrs. Brookfield, Miss Thackeray, the C. Collins', Higgins, Sir Coutts Lindsay, &c. &c. &c.—Stayed to dinner—very jolly indeed, Leighton, the Rudolf Lehmanns, &c.—smoked on the leads. Mrs. R. L. sang most exquisitely song after song ; could have listened to her for any time—I also sang, most huskily. Delightful evening altogether.

Mrs. Brookfield was Thackeray's correspondent and mother of C. H. Brookfield, the actor and wit. Higgins was Matthew James Higgins, a London magistrate, who wrote for 'The Times' as 'Jacob Omnium' and had been a friend of Thackeray. Sir Coutts Lindsay was the founder of the Grosvenor Gallery. Rudolf Lehmann married a daughter of Robert Chambers, the Edinburgh publisher.

July 2. Bad cold. . . . Then with C. K. whom I met to dine at the Mitre, Hampton Court, with *Punch*—Ponny got into our carriage—very jolly dinner—absent Burnand & Silver—home at nearly 12—rather tight—good for cold.

July 3. In the evening went with Pem & Isabel to the Levys' in Lancaster Place ; got there at 11—splendacious party. Lovely singing—Jules Lefort, Titiens, Madame Demeric-Lablache, Lemmons Skerrington and the angelic Christine Nilsson with whom I fell in love—Never enjoyed a musical party more—J. Lefort is a lesson in singing ; and altho' I have heard finer voices than Nilsson's in a room she gave me more pleasure than anybody.

For further particulars about this celestial choir I refer the reader to Grove's 'Dictionary of Music.' Everyone seems to have adored Christine Nilsson.

July 4. Read Swinburne's critique on Topsy's *Life & Death of Jason*—very fine—supper—finer—sole & pettitoes from the French shop in Princes St.

'Topsy' was William Morris.

July 5. Pem read Topsy's poem, part of it, & one or two of Swinburne's—poetry is stodgy sometimes—it was to-night.

July 9. Pem read the *Westminster* on Swinburne's poetry, very flattering—reaction—who's right & who's wrong? Where's the Archangel to tell us? Everybody ought to form an opinion for himself on all subjects, which is rather unsociable.

July 7. Called on F. Locker. Lunch there. Wife and child just home from Italy. Lady Charlotte Locker (*rien que ça !*) a most delightful old fellow, but not handsome.

Lady Charlotte Locker had been Lady Charlotte Bruce, the daughter of the Earl of Elgin; Lady Augusta Stanley, the wife of Dean Stanley, being her sister. Locker at any rate did not find Lady Charlotte defective in looks. There is a charming story of his taking her right hand and saying there was only one in the world prettier—and that was her left.

July 11. After dinner *The Last Chronicles of Barset*. Most interesting.

July 12. Then with S. B. in hansom to Whistler's by appointment. He wants me to subscribe to the bringing over of poor Traer's body, which of course I will do. Then to Shirley Brooks to dine.

Traer, Haden's assistant and now and then a model for Whistler, had died in Paris in the spring of this year. Sir Frederick Wedmore, who wrote on the subject, mistakenly calls him Freer.

July 13. This morning was obliged to administer paternal correction to Trixy. It was successful, but she forgave me so soon that I felt quite remorseful—

July 17. Mrs. Rudolf Lehmann called & we had a very pleasant chat—she's a duck—the P.P. chaff me about the ducks I know—she went away & sent me 'Mia, Mia, Mia,' by Beethoven—She also talked about Pem's loveliness. I said pray don't mention it. . . . Pem read Barset—which it were delightful.

July 21. After lunch went to Moore's where T. A. was. Moore's

studies of figures on brown paper seem to me more enchanting than anything I can think of at present—I should like to buy some.

Albert Moore (1840-93), whose decorative paintings succeeded in winning the praise of Whistler.

July 22. *Punch* from Trixy: little girl & sawdust.

The drawing appeared in the number dated August 17, 1867. The text runs thus:

REASONING BY ANALOGY.

CISSY (*who has lamed her doll*) to MAMMA (*who has sprained her ankle.*) Why do you walk like that, Mamma?

MAMMA. Because I have hurt my foot, Cissy.

CISSY. And *did all the sawdust come out?*

July 25. Then H. Aidē; he chatted about Locker just as Locker did about him—What fun men's mutual opinions of each other are. . . .

The next few entries describe the second Bennett charity performance, the same programme, at Manchester, with an account of a visit to Thomas Armstrong's father and mother. On the day itself the party dined at William Agnew's, where 'Mrs. Watts (Ellen Terry) played the fool on the lawn in the most charmingly picturesque manner and Arthur Lewis capered about round Kate Terry, whom he seems to adore.' A little later they were married. When the performance was over, du Maurier writes:

I, thinking that the actors would walk before the curtain, felt moved to go and dance and play the fool behind it, dressed in a flannel shirt and dirty pair of white ducks; upon which Burnand very amiably made a sign to the curtain lifter, and up the curtain went, and I was nearly solo. Funny chap, Burnand.

Aug. 2. *North & South* from Rose.

This was the beginning of the illustrations for Mrs. Gaskell's novel.

Aug. 10. Went to poor Strasynski & tried to comfort him in his struggle for existence. Went with him to see a picture of his in Bond St. He thinks it d—— good, & I d—— bad. He expressed his opinion; I didn't. C. S. the future brother-in-law & old lady dined with us—C. S. a thoroughly good fellow; too good for us, I'm afraid. At the same time his standard for literary pursuits is not very elevated.

Strasynski was a Polish artist who later in this year, 1867, contributed a few drawings to 'Punch.' Clement Scott married Isabel du Maurier on April 30, 1868.

Aug. 11. To Surbiton, to the Edgars to Lunch. Then a row on the river with Mrs. E., Hal Power & a fellow called Graham in a brown velvet coat. . . . After dinner, John Parry & Power fooled very well at the piano.

John Orlando Parry (1810-79), who at that time was with the German Reeds, was the originator of the piano monologue, afterwards made still more popular by Corney Grain.

Aug. 13. Long discussion about snobs—Dear P. said I was growing to be one—I discussed the point, but agreed on the whole she was right—*ça se fait*—Then T. A. came in fresh from Derbyshire & weren't we glad to see him.

Aug. 16. I went to see S. Solomon, who is back from Rome. His pictures were there, the water-colours very fine, in fact beastly fine. Then dined (with a large party of artists)—I sang, Marks sang. Lots of music. Marks was the life of the party. . . . His imitation of a drunken man was a creation. We also cock-fought.

Aug. 17. After dinner the *Newcomes*—pour la troisième fois, sinon la quatrième.

The last entry for 1867 is on August 21, when du Maurier says he is going to Paris to-morrow and that he stayed pretty late at the 'Punch' dinner persuading Tenniel to join him. 'Hope he will.'

The diary reopens on March 6, 1868, with the words:

Here we are again! 34 exactly, *ni plus ni moins*—The three dear Kids well. Went with T. A. and a colour box to our new house in Earl's Terrace to settle the paint for the drawing-rooms. . . . Nap. Vol. 11 of Griffith Gaunt.

'Griffith Gaunt' was a novel by Charles Reade, which du Maurier later calls 'awfully exciting' and later still 'very affecting.'

March 8. Murch in very late with photo of Swinburne & Menken.

Adah Isaacs Menken was the American actress, circus performer, poetess & charmer, who had just left her fourth husband. Swinburne was much attached to her, but probably not so much as people were saying. Murch was du Maurier's factotum.

March 12. Went to Ritz to lunch with Alec Ionides. Howell there, very amusing. Ernest Hart & Rossetti expected, but didn't come. . . . Then home to tea undecided whether we would go to the Solomons or not. Decided we wouldn't, so had a headache & lobster for supper.

Charles Augustus Howell was an adventurer and parasite of men of genius, chief among them being Rossetti and Whistler. His anecdote

tage was famous. Ernest Hart was the founder of the 'Lancet' and a great connoisseur of Japanese art and Rossetti was Dante Gabriel.

March 13. *Avertitatur omen.* A 13 and a Friday. My last Friday birthday I was married, 1863. The Friday birthday before, 1857, I lost my eye. I wonder if this year is to be lucky or tother way about.

March 16. After dinner *Westward Ho!* by C. Kingsley & precious dreary reading it is.

March 17. Pem, Trixy & I by underground to new house. . . . Trixy much more impressed by underground travelling than by the new house.

March 20. Went to pay a visit to my Daddy's grave in Abney Park. The Tombstone looks very handsome to my mind—put a *couronne d'immortelles* on it; had to stick the end of the string into an interstice in the stone, & dodge it up with clay, as there is nothing to lay hold of.

The last entry is on March 24, 1868.

Last night in the old home. . . . Kids made the usual jolly row. Very delightful evening in spite of the old home being deserted.

In selecting the foregoing extracts I have been thinking chiefly of their general interest and thus have omitted the more intimate personal records, such, for example, as this: 'Isabel to lunch. All of us loving, which was very nice (not that it is unusual).' And after the clearing up of a misunderstanding with his mother: 'Much relieved in finding myself mistaken. Kicky will probably recollect what I allude to if this meets his one eye in the long future.'

As a matter of fact, the diary—although it contains few foreshadowings of 'Peter Ibbetson'—is, as the self-portrait of a gay affectionate husband, father, friend and artist, and as a reconstruction of the sociable Bohemian London of the day, well worth printing in full.

THE JOSS.

BY C. F. WALKER.

CAPTAIN GALE stood on the bridge of the *Argonaut* guiding her through the narrow channel as though she was a picket boat. 'Pilot be damned,' he growled when the navigator tentatively suggested that they should take one on board in accordance with the usual practice. 'I'll have no dago pilots taking charge of my ship. Some of you young fellers nowadays want a nurse to run round after you!'

To add to the difficulties of navigation, hundreds of junks and sampans swarmed in the channel, apparently bent on committing suicide beneath the cruiser's sharp stem. But the captain's steely blue eyes seemed to take in everything at once as he stood, with sturdy legs set well apart, giving her first a touch of port helm, then a touch of starboard, as he guided his ship through the dangers with the ease and certainty of a woman threading a needle.

Once the occupants of a sampan which had a particularly narrow shave shook their fists and loosed a torrent of abuse at the *Argonaut* as she swept past. They got as good as they gave in return, for Captain Gale, leaning over his bridge rail, let drive in the men's native tongue in a manner which left them gasping and filled the signalman of the watch with envy and admiration.

'Gawd,' whispered the latter to the messenger behind a horny palm, 'Old 'Urricane ain't 'arf a treat. They say 'e can swear in a 'undred different lingos, and I shouldn't be surprised but what 'e can, neither!'

The skipper turned to the compass and gave an order to the engines. Then, cupping his hands, he hailed the fo'c'sle. 'Let go,' he bellowed in a voice that must have been plainly audible to the crowd of coolies on the jetty half a mile away. The blacksmith knocked the slip once—twice—and nothing happened. A shade of purple showed through the tan of the captain's face.

'Damn my eyes and whiskers,' he roared. 'What in the name of Jehoshaphat's wrong with that crimson anchor? If you can't anchor the ship, first lieutenant, by the beard o' the prophet I'll come down and do it meself!'

The signalman smirked his appreciation. 'And take that grin off your face, you son of a sea-cook,' added the skipper without turning round. The signalman gaped. Had this astonishing man got eyes in the back of his head?

'Urricane's blowing,' he announced laconically to his messmates ten minutes later, by which they understood that the 'Old man' was not in the best of tempers. And indeed he had every cause for exasperation. For when information had been received from the authorities of a sudden increase of opium smuggling on that part of the coast where the *Argonaut* was cruising, she had been detailed by the Commander-in-Chief to investigate and, if possible, to suppress the illicit traffic. But though they had spent three weeks dodging in and out of every creek and inlet and searching hundreds of junks and sampans, not a grain of opium had so far rewarded their efforts. And now this was the last chance, for the *Argonaut* was required for other duties.

'Damn it, Number One,' said Captain Gale as, the ship at last anchored to his satisfaction, he paced the quarter-deck with his second-in-command; 'this absolutely beats me. Here's this business going on right under our noses, unless the powers that be are talking through their hats, and we've drawn a complete blank. But, by gad, we must find something this time. I won't have my ship the laughing-stock of the squadron.'

The marine officer came up to them, clicked his heels, and saluted. 'Orders for the officer-of-the-guard, sir?' he enquired.

The 'Old man' paused in his walk. 'Board every junk and sampan in the place,' he said; 'and if you come back without any opium'—the blue eyes twinkled—'by Heaven I'll court-martial you!'

He stood for a few moments watching the little motor-boat making for the nearest group of junks. Then, turning towards his cabin, he unbuttoned his tunic, revealing a massive, hairy chest.

'Gad, it's hot,' he exclaimed, mopping his brow with an enormous bandana. 'I'm as sticky as—that anchor of yours, Number One.' He pushed his second-in-command through the open door. 'Come along, and we'll drink to my Joss. Six commissions I've served on this station and it's never failed me yet.' His tone was half-jesting, half-serious, as he nodded towards the large ivory Bhudda on his desk. The first lieutenant knew its story well. How his superior had 'acquired' it from a temple in a wild escapade in his gunroom days; how he had nearly been scuppered in the process; and how

he had never been parted from it since. He always professed to believe that it brought him luck—a curious trait in the character of so practical a man. Certainly he seldom, if ever, failed in any enterprise to which he set his mind, but this, his junior decided, was due less to any latent power in the image than to the inflexible determination of its owner.

An electric bell hung over the table, but 'Old 'Urricane' had no use for what he termed 'these newfangled contraptions.'

'Ah Fong,' he roared, and a Chinese steward appeared, startlingly silent by contrast with his master. 'Bring two John Collinsees chop chop and plenty ice.'

When the necessary refreshment appeared a few minutes later, the first lieutenant raised his glass. 'Well, here's to the Joss, sir,' he smiled.

The captain took a gulp and spluttered. 'What the dev— Ah Fong!' he bellowed. 'Dammit, man, this isn't a John Collins; what is it?' he demanded as his steward reappeared.

The Chinaman spread his hands deprecatingly. 'No have got gin, sir,' he explained. 'B'long finish. I put-ee whiskey. . . .'

At eleven-thirty the following morning Captain Gale stood regarding a speck of dust on the forefinger of his white-gloved hand, which he had just passed over a ventilating shaft.

'Bless my soul, first lieutenant,' he exclaimed. 'Is my ship being turned into a refuse dump? Look at this—look at it, sir!'

His second-in-command sorrowfully contemplated his senior's outstretched digit, but wisely refrained from comment. The usual Thursday rounds were in progress and things were not going well. Word had passed swiftly round the lower deck that "'Urricane" was blowing,' and the first lieutenant, who knew his captain, was well aware of the cause. For he prided himself that the ship, as always, was a model of cleanliness and in reality the apple of the skipper's eye, but the 'Old man' was down on his luck. For the unfortunate officer-of-the-guard had returned from his search empty-handed, narrowly avoiding being put under arrest for his pains, and the ship was sailing that afternoon with nothing but a tale of failure for the C.-in-C. It was a bitter pill for 'Old 'Urricane,' of all people, to swallow; a fact that was appreciated by every man on board.

The rounds dragged on and the faces of the retinue, from the heads of departments down to the messengers in rear, told their

own sad story. Presently they reached the captain's store, and at once the 'Old man's' hawk-like eye rested on a case labelled 'GIN.' With the memory of the John Collins still lingering, he turned on his steward who, in accordance with usual Service custom, was 'standing rounds.'

'I thought there was no gin left,' he began. 'Then what the deuce is that?' He indicated the case with a prod of his foot. The first lieutenant, only too glad that attention had been distracted from his department for a moment, permitted himself a smile.

'Empty, sir,' replied the Chinaman promptly. 'Catchee some more when ship go Shanghai side.'

Now a prod from one of the 'Owner's' number ten boots, particularly in his present mood, would have sent an empty wooden box flying across the store, but this one never even rocked.

'Empty be damned,' said Captain Gale. 'Open it up at once.'

The Chinaman jumped forward. 'No, no, sir,' he jabbered excitedly. 'Empty—only bottles——' His master fixed the unfortunate man with a blue eye which, though it often twinkled with kindly humour, could and did sometimes make a defaulter wish he had never been born. The steward wilted and stood back with bowed head.

'Open it,' repeated the skipper, turning to his coxswain. The latter reached down a cutlass from the rack over his head and in thirty seconds the lid of the case lay in splinters on the deck. Then he grabbed the Chinaman by the pigtail just as the latter made a dash for the ladder.

An exclamation from the captain brought everyone a step nearer, those behind craning their necks over their seniors' shoulders. For the box was packed as tight and neat as you like with the object of their three weeks' search! Case after case was then opened. Gin, sugar, condensed milk, all alike, with the exception of a few to supply the captain's immediate wants, were filled with the little brown pellets.

No wonder, then, that the *Argonaut* had chanced to be near the scene of the smuggling. An ingenious plan, but how absurdly simple! The captain's stores and empties could pass in and out of the ship without any awkward questions; his steward was an opportunist, and that was that, except that, unfortunately for himself, he had just underestimated his master's thirst.

But the first lieutenant was possessed of an enquiring turn of mind. He liked to dig out cause and effect. And as he traced

back the chain of events that had led up to the opening of the fatal case, he turned to his superior with an involuntary exclamation.

'By Jove, sir, the Joss!'

Under the coxswain's orders the messengers had formed themselves into an escort and marched the wretched Ah Fong for'ard to a cell. 'Old 'Urricane' turned to the little group of officers remaining.

'Thank you, gentlemen,' he said, with the old twinkle back in his eye. 'That will do for this morning. I'm glad to see that the ship maintains her usual standard of efficiency. And now,' he concluded, 'as I have never acquired a taste for opium and I appear to have run out of gin, you will all do me the honour of adjourning to my cabin and toasting the Joss in something worthy of the occasion!'

ECHOES.

UNTEMPERED sun, a burnished sea
That smites the eye with brazen glare;
And, heavy on the languid air,
Rich tropic scents from flower and tree.

A gull's cry—and an exiled soul
Hears echoes from far northern seas,
Where round the utmost Hebrides
The long Atlantic surges roll,

And feels a cool breath, born of foam
And mingled with keen airs that blow
Where heather and bog-myrtle grow
And peat smoke drifts from hearths of home.

E. TATTERSALL.

INKY WOOING.

BY JOHN LAMBOURNE.

[*Horace, a terrier owned by Charles Wilburton, introduces his master to Jane Whittle by means of a m  le with her Aberdeens, Sealyhams and Pekes. Jane also owns Mogul, a prize mastiff, is the daughter of an apple-expert, and is engaged to Hubert Chipping, a writer. Charles is hardly a success with Mr. Whittle, but still decides to win Jane. To this end he takes a course in writing under Mr. George Mundon, an ex-dog lifter from America, whose former ally, Ely Roost, yearns for Mogul. Charles goes to discuss literature with Mr. Mundon.*]

CHAPTER VI.

OF HOW MR. MUNDON WAS TEMPTED (*contd.*).

THE 'Royal Hotel' in Dean Street is not, perhaps, as palatial as some London hotels, or as comfortable as others, but it has the reputation of being quiet and exclusive. It attains its exclusiveness in the usual way, by charging twice the proper price and giving half the proper service : it secures its quietness by the same method.

The lounge is a large and chaste affair of red and white. At the far end is a short passage, on which is a red illuminated sign 'American Bar.' All exclusive hotels designate their bars as such. In our researches in connection with this work we have been at some pains to determine the difference between an American bar and any other bar. These researches have led us into a vast number of such places, both of the American and the non-American variety, and we regret that, to date, we have been unable to discover where the difference, if any, lies. In both, the barmaids become rude when questioned closely on the subject, and the longer one's investigations continue the ruder they become. It has been, in fact, our unhappy experience to be threatened with the hall-porter by a platinum blonde. We have not yet lost hope, however, and intend to continue with the work, putting the result, if any, at the reader's disposal in the shape of a footnote.

But we wander from our theme.

On a certain evening in June the lounge of the 'Royal Hotel' was wrapped in its usual sedate exclusiveness. A frog-faced porter stared goggle-eyed at nothing; a lady in the office sat making out a bill, chewing her pen from time to time, for the bills of the 'Royal Hotel' were lengthy and thorough affairs that shirked nothing—no detail too small, no item too much trouble. Five guests were sitting in the lounge wrapped in profoundest melancholy. They were oldish men with spats and grey moustaches of the type that is seen shopping in the Army and Navy Stores or quarrelling with vicars in country parishes. They are the type that considers England has gone to the dogs and writes to the *Morning Post* about it. They are the type that once roamed London and the countryside in countless hordes, but that—like the quagga that roamed the plains of South Africa in the same numbers—is now becoming extinct.

Each sat on a red plush chair thinking sad thoughts of the decadence of his native land: the increase of taxation, the scantiness of woman's attire, and the disappearance of law and order. For all these things, and especially for the disappearance of law and order, they considered America responsible. As the gentleman near the window had pointed out in some twenty letters, America was shipping 265 potential criminals to London daily; men filled with a complete disregard for human life who sooner or later would institute in England the gangster methods of the United States.

All five looked up and frowned when their meditations were interrupted by two intruders who entered from the street door and, with the unerring accuracy of homing pigeons, made their way towards the American Bar. Mr. Mundon's voice was naturally of the booming variety and every word resounded through the lounge. The five occupants stiffened in their chairs. The burly, pug-faced American was earnestly recommending his companion to have a newly married couple ambushed with a machine-gun. The five gasped and turned purple; symptoms which heralded with unfailing accuracy another letter to the *Morning Post*.

Near the passageway, Charles looked round with the superficial glance one gives to the 'Royal Hotel's' collection of preserved fossils. Then his eye caught the figure of another elderly man coming in at the far door. He started and hurriedly followed Mr. Mundon into the passage and to the left, where the American Bar stood ready to receive them.

A taste for blood was growing on Mr. Mundon. Starting with the comparatively innocuous idea of pumping the erring Stephen Howe full of lead, he was now intent on making for Charles's book an end sad in the extremest sense of the word. And every minute saw some new invention of science harnessed to make it sadder still. But Charles had suddenly become out of tune with him. He interrupted a proposal to use poison gas in the church with the remark, 'The oldish fellow coming in at the door when we went through the lounge—did you see him?'

'Nope,' said Mr. Mundon.

'It was old Whittle.'

Mr. Mundon dragged his mind with difficulty from the pleasant realms of *ferrie*. 'Eh?' he said.

'That old fellow coming in at the door was Whittle.'

'Whittle?'

'Whittle of Bransby Towers—my girl's father.'

'You don't say!'

'It was.'

'Well, well!'

Here Gladys interrupted. The lady who presided over the American Bar was not used to being ignored. Any ignoring that was done she liked to do herself. When the bar was full she gave the impression of a cat's-lights man surrounded by mewing cats languidly doling out occasional portions. Customers asked for drinks as a favour and then waited till they got them. To be kept waiting herself was not on her programme.

'Well?' she asked sharply, adding a third to Mr. Mundon's.

The two met her eyes, started guiltily, and ordered their cocktails. Having secured the order, Gladys carried it out in the usual way by turning to a mirror and arranging her back hair.

The hair finished, only the space of time necessary for her to manicure her nails intervened, and the cocktails were served. Charles, thoroughly crushed, thanked her and paid her. Mr. Mundon took his drink abstractedly. Not a silent man as a rule, something had given him food for thought.

'Say,' he said at length, 'this guy, this guy Whittle—what's he doing here?'

'Search me,' said Charles succinctly. 'If he hadn't been looking so hellish grim I'd have gone up and asked him. Probably came up to buy a few apple seeds or something. Crazy on apples.'

'No fruit store where he's at?'

'He grows them. It's his hobby. Thinks of nothing else, his daughter tells me. He's discovered a new apple. It's called Whittle's Orange Pippin.'

'Whittle's which?'

'Orange Pippin.'

'Where does the orange come in?'

'It doesn't. That's what had me at first.'

'And this guy discovered it?'

'Yes. Grew it. Made a new variety in some way.'

'And that's his hobby? He's strong for apples?'

'Yes.'

'Now that,' said Mr. Mundon reflectively, 'may come in useful for Ely.'

'Who's Ely?'

'A guy. I give him a job in the school but he re-signed. You see Ely's not like me—he's had no education. He's a Bowery boy, is Ely, from Noo York. He's a rough-neck. He ain't got the knowledge of swell English like what I has.'

'And where do you come from?'

'Ch'cago. Have another drink—if Clara there can spare the time.'

Gladys glanced at them.

'Two more, Dorothy,' said Mr. Mundon.

Gladys turned over a page of her book, *Livid Passion*, by Rosamond Loughwater, and went on reading. A minute later, stifling a yawn, she looked up again and enquired, 'Two more?'

'If it's not troubling you?' said Mr. Mundon.

'Your job would be all right,' he added when the drinks were ready, 'if it weren't for folk coming in and wanting liquor.'

Charles swallowed his second cocktail quickly. The urge had come upon him to start his novel. All this, he felt, was wasting time. He ignored a reference of Mr. Mundon's to a conversation alleged to have taken place between the governors of North and South Carolina, rose, and reached for his hat. Mr. Mundon sighed and reluctantly extended a large hand as Charles stood before him ready to go. Having a fondness for free drinks he suggested another meeting for the following day at the same place and time, by when, he said, he would have thought up some more psychology for the story. Inwardly wondering what further devilish con-

trivances Mr. Mundon could possibly bring to bear against the harassed couple, Charles agreed and made his way out of the bar into the lounge. He hesitated, for Mr. Whittle was sitting there. But he was staring at the door as if expecting someone, and so annoyed was his expression that Charles again decided not to risk a tick-off. In another minute he had collected his bag, hailed a taxi, and driven away.

Mr. Whittle saw, but did not recognise, the figure of Charles. He looked at his watch for the fifteenth time, clicked irritably, and rose from his seat. He looked at the sign 'American Bar,' consulted the long-suffering watch once again to see if it was a fit and proper time to take alcoholic refreshment, and, deciding that it was, disappeared into the passage and to the left.

He found the bar occupied by one customer only: a burly man with the face of a prize-fighter, who sat at a table slowly twirling an empty cocktail glass between his finger and thumb and staring at it absently. And here it may be said that a vague disquiet was on Mr. Mundon. The basis of his success in his former avocations had lain in establishing friendly relations with his proposed victims. And to establish friendly relations it was necessary to discover that weak spot which all of us possess. It may be the collection of postage stamps or old jade, it may be the breeding of chickens or the cultivation of potatoes. It is there. The thing is to find it—not always easy with a man one has never met before; a thing, in fact, often of supreme difficulty, necessitating weeks of patient research.

He looked up and saw the thin figure of Mr. Whittle standing at the bar sipping in an irritable way at a whisky and soda. He started and all but dropped the glass he was playing with. This was too much. There is a limit to the temptation a man can undergo. Here was Fate actually thrusting this Whittle man on him after first putting him in possession of that soft spot so necessary to success. A strange soft spot, and one Mr. Mundon had never encountered before—apples! But undoubtedly the one authentic soft spot all the same. True, he had now abandoned a criminal career. But there was Ely to consider. Ely had been his faithful partner for years. Did he not owe him something? And if he helped Ely this once, Ely could never complain again. The School of Writing seemed to be a little gold mine; but was two thousand additional gold dollars to be sneezed at on that account? Hardly.

The above would seem good and sufficient reasons why Mr. Mundon should at least sound Mr. Whittle and see how he reacted to expert handling. But yet another force moved him, one which entered the realms of his beloved psychology—he was finding a life of respectability a little dull. Money gained so irreproachably seemed somehow wrong. This is the snag that all reformers are up against. Crime is exciting. Respectability is dull. It is all very well for those who have always been respectable, but when one has tasted the delights of crime it is different. Crime compared with respectability is as whisky to lemonade.

All these impulses, therefore, working in one direction, caused Mr. Mundon to rise slowly from his seat, go to the bar as if in search of more refreshment and there, catching sight of Mr. Whittle's profile, start backwards as if pole-axed. He recovered and stood staring fixedly at the back of his victim's head—the only part of it now available for inspection.

'Say,' he said at length, 'don't tell me I'm a-dressing Mr. Whittle!'

Mr. Whittle, who had been aware of the fixed scrutiny of this pug-faced man for some time and had turned his back on him, now presented a frowning face. 'My name is Whittle,' he said, 'but I hardly think——'

'Not,' said Mr. Mundon in a low voice, 'not Whittle, the apple fan!'

'The apple fan!'

'I'm an American, Mr. Whittle, and maybe I've said the wrong word. What I'm getting at is, are you the guy who's strong for apples? Are you the Whittle who invented the orange pippin?'

'Whittle's Orange Pippin is the name of a new apple raised by me.'

'Then put it there!'

 With these words Mr. Mundon caught the other's unwilling hand and wrung it heartily.

Mr. Whittle snatched away his hand with a jerk. He frowned at the familiarity, but despite the frown there was a look in his eye that was not altogether displeased. That a casual stranger in a bar should have known of his apple and recognised the man who raised it was more than he had ever expected. Insufficient attention, it had always seemed to him, had been given to the Whittle's Orange Pippin. The apple was almost unknown. None of the big growers would take it up. And yet, here was a man——

The man, however, was speaking.

'Mr. Whittle, sir, I'm proud to meet you. In the U-nited States of America there's no apples more thought of than Whittle's what's its name. No, sir.'

'Indeed! I am surprised.'

'Yes, *sir*,' went on Mr. Mundon enthusiastically, seeing he was pursuing the right line, 'Whittle's Pippin is the only apple America would give you two brass sous for.'

'But this is strange. I have heard nothing of it. Surely I should have known if my apple had become famous in America!'

Mr. Mundon raised his forefinger. 'I'll put you wise, Mr. Whittle. It's being kept dark. They're going to spring it on the public when they've raised the right quantity.'

'Are you a grower?'

'Me? Sure I'm a grower. Been a grower all my life. . . . Until the last few years,' he added, considering.

'Have you raised many specimens?'

'Till I was tired.'

'This is extremely interesting. And have you—'

A page entered. 'Gentleman to see you, sir,' he said to Mr. Whittle.

'Tut!' said Mr. Whittle. He paused and looked at the rugged features of Mr. Mundon as if loath to draw his eyes away. 'It is the man I was waiting for from the Pomological department of the Fruit Growers' Association,' he explained. 'My interview with him will be a lengthy one, I fear. And I am leaving by the night train.' He hesitated. 'If you ever happen to travel in the direction of my home—I live at Bransby Towers, Stough, in Buckinghamshire—I should be delighted if you would call in and see me. I could show you some promising seedlings. There are also certain points I would like to discuss with an American grower. The American system of pruning to the fifth bud of the laterals is, to my mind— However,'—Mr. Whittle broke off—'I can hardly go into that now. Are you ever in Buckinghamshire, Mr. Mundon?'

'Now,' said Mr. Mundon, 'as it happens, by a strange coincidence, I'm going there in a few days. Can you beat it!'

'And will your travels take you anywhere near Stough?'

'Maybe.'

'Perhaps you would care to—'

'Sure. I'll look in, Mr. Whittle. I'll be proud to renew our acquaintance.'

'Then I will say good-bye for the present. Don't forget the

name of my house—Bransby Towers. I am delighted to think that over in America—— But I must go . . . good-bye.' And with quick, nervous steps Mr. Whittle followed the page out of the bar.

'It's just fate,' said Mr. Mundon, staring absently at Gladys. 'Nothing else. Fate.'

'What?' said Gladys, looking up for a brief instant from her book.

'I said it was fate. And if it's not worrying you and you'd maybe care to take a spell off from reading, I'll have a pink gin—and another after that, if so be you've come to the end of the chapter and the story's not gripping you too hard.'

Mr. Mundon's duties in connection with the Metropolitan School of Writing were not, on the whole, onerous. When comments on pupils' efforts are stereotyped and the efforts themselves never read, the work becomes mechanical. The most important part is the addressing of envelopes and the licking of stamps. This, Mr. Mundon thought, could safely be entrusted to his two clerks. He himself dealt with the financial side, the cashing of cheques and postal orders, and had plenty of time to spare for callers. For this reason he never discouraged the visits of the lugubrious Ely, for Mr. Mundon was not amongst those who like to pass their time in silent meditation and he found even the recriminations of his one-time partner preferable to the austere silence of the office walls.

Now Ely, though officially on the staff of the school, had never abandoned his old profession. But he was finding himself severely handicapped in that profession without a partner. Then why—some smart Alec of a reader will probably enquire—did he not get another one? The answer is simple. He couldn't. It is easy enough in some professions, but not in the dog-stealing profession. One cannot advertise: 'Unique opportunity. Established dog stealer wants partner. Large profits. No agents.' Nor can one pick up any Tom, Dick or Harry from the streets. The profession is a highly specialised one calling for talent and experience. One has not only to steal one's dog—that is comparatively easy—one has to know how to alter its appearance and how to dispose of it when stolen. In America, Ely might have found a helper without much difficulty, but in England he was not in touch with the brothers of his profession.

'Morning, Ely,' said Mr. Mundon as Ely closed the door behind him. 'How's things?'

His friend grunted and took a seat.

'Like that? And what's biting you now?'

'Aw! You knows.'

'No luck?'

The other shrugged his shoulders.

'Mean to tell me?' pursued Mr. Mundon, 'that just because you haven't a pard you can't pick up a dog or two!'

'I can pick dem up,' said Ely; 'but what dey're worth? De good stuff is look after. You need a pard to get at it.'

'Now see here, Ely, you're on the same old racket. I'm a lit'rary guy. For what for should I go lifting dogs? It's common sense I'm not doing it.'

'It's letting your pard down,' said Ely.

'It's letting nothing down. A man's got to go respectable some time. You know that. Look what happened in the States!'

'You fix wid me to lift Ferdie. Den you cry off it, and say you start a school. Dat's letting a pard down, dat is.' This was a sore point with Ely. The two had made arrangements for the abstraction of the famous bull-terrier, Ferdie (winner of eighty-two firsts, and thrice cup for the best dog at Crufts), but just before the event was to have taken place, Mr. Mundon had announced to his partner that he was 'through' with stealing dogs and intended to start a school. Ely had never forgiven it.

'Well . . .' hesitated Mr. Mundon, and it may as well be said here that his previous talk was largely bluff. He had already decided to join his partner in one last glorious coup. But he meant it to be the last—hence his pretended reluctance, lest his partner should be tempted to pester him again. 'Well . . . maybe I let you down a bit over that Ferdie job. Now look—suppose I gives you a hand this last once. Suppose I gives you a hand with that Mogul—'

'De Mogul!' For a moment Ely's eyes almost shone—then the light died out of them. 'It ain't no good,' he said curtly, 'he sleep in a room wid dat goil what keeps him.'

'And suppose we get him out?'

'Ain't possible. Dere's dogs would raise Cain.'

'And suppose I slept in the house as a guest—how then?'

'What you talkin' about? How you sleep dere as a guest—huh?'

Thereupon Mr. Mundon related the events of the previous evening and how Mr. Whittle had invited him to call on him at Bransby Towers. 'And once I'm there, Ely,' he concluded, 'if I can't wangle it so I stay the night, then I'm not the guy I was. No, sir, I'm not the George P. Mundon that used to be.'

Ely stared at him in awe. 'Gosh!' he said, 'if we pull de Mogul!'

'Now look here,' said Mr. Mundon briskly, 'this is how we'll work it. In a week's time I write this guy, Whittle, I'm going north and that maybe I'll call in and see him. We arrive at this berg—Stuff or Stow or something—in the evening, you driving the automobile. Near the berg we has a breakdown. I leaves you with the auto and walks to Whittle's. I talk him apples and then I asks him is there anywheres I can sleep the night, and he asks me stay there.'

'I've study dat place,' said Ely with subdued excitement, 'an' de goil's got an auto. Supposin' dey wants drive you to a station?'

'I'm waiting for you to fix that auto, sonny, and I waits till late. If they wants to shoot me off by train then, I tell them it's too late to call on the guy I'm bound for.'

'Gosh! George, you've got a headpiece. Maybe dey'll say dere's a hotel?'

'There is a ho-tel. But by heck! if the spirit of hospitality's that dead in this god-darn island, it's time you and me cleared, boy.'

'How's you going fix de doig?'

'Leave that to me. From twelve o'clock on you're waiting near the gate with the automobile. Then I come along with this Mogul boy and we pop him in the auto. You takes him to the depository and you're back by morning when you reports to me you've been working on the car all night and got it fixed.'

'What's going to happen to you morning?'

'Well, what is going to happen? I gets up, has breakfast, hears a long spiel about a stole dog, talks some more apples, and de-parts . . . though how in heck a feller talks apples that time I don't know. I can talk most things, Ely, for a longer duration by the clock than the bulk of geezers in this country, but apples——! Apples 'es got cores and pips and they're red on one side and green on the other or vice versa, but what in heck there is else to 'em I don't know. Still, unless George P. has lost his form, I'll manage on that for the requisite period of time.'

'Sounds good to me.'

'It is good, sonny.'

'It'll need workin'.'

'It'll get it.'

'How you get de doig from de goil's room?'

'I'll get it.'

It will be noticed that Mr. Mundon, far from grudgingly doing his friend a last unwilling favour, was now the leading light in the affair and that all the hesitation, if any, came from Ely; that Mr. Mundon, in fact, was assuming the rôle of a Lady Macbeth in the contemplated crime, and with easy confidence screwing his partner's courage to the sticking point. The fact is that these two had dropped naturally into their old relationships. In the old days it was ever Mr. Mundon who was the leader. We have said before that respectability was palling on him; and for this reason he returned to crime with added zest and enthusiasm. A dog, we are told on good authority—though we have never noted the fact ourselves and would have refrained from mentioning it if we had—will return to its vomit. Mr. Mundon had vomited crime. Up to this instant, and very properly, he had left his vomit alone. Now— But perhaps we have pursued the simile long enough.

In deciding to wait one week before attempting the theft of Miss Whittle's Mogul, Mr. Mundon was actuated by two motives. Firstly, he felt that so quick an acceptance of the invitation might—after the event—look a little suspicious: secondly, he wished to give himself time to find out a little more about apples than he knew already. The success of the scheme, after all, hung on that humble and obvious fruit. Mr. Mundon, like you or I, looked on the apple as a thing that appears towards the end of dinner in company with a few bananas and an orange, when one views it with the complete lack of interest that food inspires in the surfeited. But there is more to the apple than this. Working behind the scenes are earnest gentlemen, striving to get us larger and better apples. One day, perhaps, these gentlemen will bring us back to the first and original apple—the one which caused such mischief to the human race. If they do, and if further penalties are imposed against its consumption, will we refrain this time?—or will there be such a run as greengrocers never experienced before? One wonders.

Moralising, however, is expressly forbidden by Rule 16 of our

correspondence school. There is a lot more we could say about the apple and the human race and we hope that readers will admire our self-restraint and our obedience to the rules of our school.

CHAPTER VII.

OF HOW MR. MUNDON SPILLED THE BEANS.

As will be remembered, Mr. Mundon had arranged to meet Charles at the bar of the 'Royal Hotel' the following evening at about six-thirty. As a matter of fact, he was there, with Ely, at five-thirty. They felt it necessary, these two, to seal the business they had in hand with a quick one, and presented themselves well on time. There was much to be discussed in both the business and alcoholic line before Charles Wilburton should appear.

Only Miss Dalmeyer (Gladys, in other words) was present when they entered. She was arranging a side lock of hair to curve slightly farther down over the left ear. It was an operation requiring nice adjustment, and naturally took time. It was completed by five-forty, when Miss Dalmeyer turned and contemplated the two men with a slight frown of displeasure. This poor girl was continually being interrupted when she was busy with intricate details of her toilet.

'Any objections to us comin' into your bood-wore, Ethel?' enquired Mr. Mundon, sensing her grievance.

Miss Dalmeyer shrugged her shoulders. It was an action copied from Lavinia La Noire in *Unbridled Love*, and registered such extreme nonchalance and contempt that customers, after receiving a dose, generally took their drinks and slunk away into the darkest corners. Mr. Mundon, however, was unimpressed. Most of his life had been spent in circles where contempt is expressed with the end of a broken bottle and these finer shades passed him by.

'Now see here, Amy,' he said, 'you mix me and my friend one each of those pink Plymouth gins, and we like it like mother has it—good and strong.'

'Really!' said Miss Dalmeyer languidly, opening her powder-puff case and turning away to look in the mirror.

'Gosh!' said Mr. Mundon. 'Look here, Gertie, give your face a rest.'

It says much for the girl that she retained her languid poise. In all her career few customers had spoken to her save with a kind of cringing apology. Her only reply to Mr. Mundon's suggestion was to dally some four minutes longer with the powder puff than she would otherwise have done.

'See here,' said Mr. Mundon, when at last she got the drinks, 'it ain't fair bothering you this way. You're busy.'

In spite of this they bothered her a great deal more. The prospect of another of his old adventures was exhilarating Mr. Mundon. Even Ely warned him to take care, but the warnings were unheeded. Pink gin followed pink gin. Poor Gladys had hardly time to manicure one finger-nail before she was expected to suspend operations, make the tiring journey to the shelves, and go to the trouble of pouring out more drinks.

At six-thirty, Ely made his departure and at six forty-five Charles appeared. Mr. Mundon, it seemed to him, was in an extremely genial mood. Never at any time stand-offish, there was something embarrassingly friendly about the shout of welcome with which he was greeted. It was given in the tone usually reserved for masters at sea calling from ship to ship, to football fans when the ball is snicked between the posts, or to mastodons bellowing over prehistoric marshes. Gladys dropped her nail-file with a clatter and looked up with raised eyebrows. Charles reeled but righted himself and stared blinking at his friend who was smiling broadly and waving above his head a hand the size of a York ham.

'At-a-boy!' yelled Mr. Mundon. 'I was waiting for you. I was waiting for you, laddie. And if you don't believe me ask Alice-in-Wonderland here. I said to her, "Sister, there's a friend of mine coming, and what's more, Mildred," I said, "this young feller's going to be one of the leading liter-ery lights. You can sell Dickens," I said.' With a sweep of his hand that just missed Charles's face and two glasses, Mr. Mundon illustrated the sale of Dickens. 'Sell him out, sir, lock, stock and barrel from *Pickwick Papers* to *The Ancient Mariner*. Sell out and buy Charles Wilburtons and you'll make a packet.'

'In the meantime,' said Charles, 'we'll buy a drink.'

He found Mr. Mundon in hearty agreement with him. The idea—though there was no reason why it should have—seemed to strike him as original and brilliant. 'Boy,' he said, grasping Charles's hand, 'you've said it! You've hit the almighty nail on its god-darned head. As soon as Agnes here has done her chores we'll have two pink ones.'

'The trouble with that dame,' he said in a resounding voice as, later, they sat with their drinks before them, 'is that she's too high-minded. She's a Vere de Vere and way I look at it you're darned lucky to get served at all. You begun your story?' he asked.

Charles nodded. 'Began it last night,' he said, adding modestly, 'it's going very well.'

'I've been thinking over it,' said Mr. Mundon. 'It's all wrong.'

'What's wrong with it?' asked the startled Charles.

'Not enough love interest.'

'It's all love interest!'

'Then make it longer so's you can get more yet. You've got to have a long novel these days or reviewers won't touch it—you're out of the picture.' Mr. Mundon again all but obliterated two glasses in illustrating the contempt of reviewers for a short novel.

'You don't know yet,' said Charles, 'how long it's going to be. Anything else wrong?'

'There's not a darn thing that's right.'

'Then what were you selling Dickens for?' asked Charles indignantly.

'Cause he ain't fit to throw guts to a bear.'

'And am I?'

'Nope. But you will be. When you and me's got together and thought out that story good and proper there'll be a slump in Macaulay.'

'Macaulay?'

'Yep. I tell you, sir, there's fellows selling out now on *Paradise Lost*.'

'What else is wrong about my book?'

'Everything. You want more psychology.'

'It is chiefly a psychological novel.'

'Then it's what I'm telling you—it ain't long enough.'

'I haven't written it yet.'

'How much have you written?'

'Two chapters.'

'Scrap them.'

'Why?'

'Not enough sex. If a book ain't stuffed with sex reviewers'll laugh at it. And talking about sex, as the Dook of North Carolina said, we shan't penetrate very far into this darned affair without refreshment. Lady Ermytrude's here and so's the gin. The thing is to get the two connected. And once you've done that, boy, you've done a man's job. Yes, sir; you've put in play mechanism which will in doo course bear fruit. Heh! . . . Emma! Here you! . . . Miss Electricity!'

'Oh, go and chew a nut!' said Gladys, stung, possibly for the first time in her life, into an unladylike retort. 'What do you want now?'

'Two gins . . . if it won't dirty your nails or bring your hair down. Give your face a rest, girl. Have a bath. Get a pail and do your feet.' He turned to Charles. 'As I was saying, your novel's all right, but there's not enough adventure. What you want nowadays is spice. Got a criminal in it?'

'Yes. I told you.'

'Then get another. Get two more. Bung it full of them,' he continued, becoming lavish. 'Turn on the tap and let it run over with 'em. Have nothing else. If there's anyone in that god-darned book that's not a crook, shoot him out. You can't have too many. I know. Been one myself.'

'*Been one?*' enquired Gladys, bringing the drinks and taking the money and accenting the past tense with raised eyebrows and a faint smile.

'Yes, sir,' continued Mr. Mundon, 'been one and going to be again. That's me.'

Charles smiled and turned to Miss Dalmeyer.

'What crime,' he asked, 'do you think Mr. Mundon will attempt?'

'Suicide, I hope,' she said.

Mr. Mundon thought this out and frowned at the result. He had his answer, but by the time it was ready Miss Dalmeyer was behind the bar and deep in the intricacies of those portions of her toilet she was wont to practise there.

The situation, of course, had become clear to Charles. Mr. Mundon had been in the American Bar too long and had had one,

if not two, over the eight. His course was obviously to get him out and on the way home. Failing that he must be left where he was—but better for all concerned if he could be started on the homeward journey. The longer he stayed here the more precarious would that journey become.

Mr. Mundon, a cautious man as a rule, became far from cautious when in his cups. 'Yes, *boy*,' he went on confidentially, 'I've had adventure in my life. If you want adventure for your story I'm the man to give it you.'

'What particular form did your adventures take?' enquired Charles.

'Four legs and a tail.'

'What do you mean?'

'Dogs. I'm a lover of dogs.'

'So am I, but I don't call that adventure.'

'It's adventure when you love 'em as bad as I do. Or I should say as bad as I *did*. I don't pinch dogs now.'

'Pinch!'

'Pinch. *P.i.n.c.h.* By the dozen. Large ones and small ones. Black ones and white ones. Blue ones and green ones. And all with four legs and a tail. That's me.'

'A bit dangerous, wasn't it?' asked Charles, smiling.

'Nope. Easy as falling off a brick.'

'Well, I hope you don't pinch mine.'

'What breed's he, sonny?' enquired Mr. Mundon with interest.

'Several—all very good.'

'He's safe, kid. Safe as the Bank of England. I wouldn't touch a pal's dog. Which reminds me, as the Governor of North Carolina once said in a speech, you won't go far without a drop of oil.'

'No,' said Charles sternly. 'We'll have no more. At least, I won't. I've got to get. Are you coming along?'

'What I propose,' said Mr. Mundon, 'is that you and me have a quick one and then go home—huh?'

'No.'

'Then we'll have a slow one. . . . Dorothy!'

Miss Dalmeyer's scornful eyes raised themselves, after an interval, from her book.

'Well?'

'Two more. Gins. That girl,' he explained to Charles, 'is a reader. She sure is. She's lit'rary. She may be no darn good

at serving drinks, but she's a corker in the liter-ery line and you can quote me as having said it. And I'll tell you another thing,' continued Mr. Mundon, wagging his finger emphatically at Charles, 'you don't get your drinks flung at you here—no, sir, you darn-well wait for 'em.'

'This,' said Charles when the scornful lady had left their table, 'is positively the last. I'm going back home.'

'Working on your book?'

'Yes.'

'At-a-boy! We've got to get that ending figured out.'

'We can't do it now.'

'We'll give 'em a rough time, sonny. We'll make every geezer in that encyclopædia of yours sorry he was darn-well born. They're for the high jumps, boy!'

'Are you ready?'

'Yep.'

'Then come along.'

Mr. Mundon's gait was still fairly steady.

'How do you get home?' asked Charles when they stood outside the hotel.

'Un'ground.'

'Where do you go to?'

'Ham'smith.'

'Is that where you live?'

'Yep.'

'Well then, we'll walk to Dover Street Station.'

Mr. Mundon went like a lamb. He seemed a little dazed. Perhaps it was the fresh air. Docilely he allowed Charles to get him his ticket and docilely he went with him into the station. Only at the stop of the moving stairway did he suddenly halt, staring with a frown at the notice, *Dogs must be carried*.

'Now ain't that aggravatin'?' he said.

'What?'

Mr. Mundon pointed. 'Says there, fellow's got to carry a dawg.'

'Don't be a fool!'

'It's you's being the fool, laddie. Darn it! Can't you read? Man's got to have a dog before he can travel on this god-darn switchback.'

'Oh, get on the thing and buzz off,' cried Charles irritably.

'See here now,' said Mr. Mundon, putting up a forefinger and

wagging his head reprovingly, 'I'm a respectable lit'rary man, and as such've got to obey rules and regulations. No dog, no staircase. You and me's got to go back to the hotel and have another.'

'We have not.'

'Then I got to get a dog. Got to obey law.' And Mr. Mundon darted off before Charles could grab him.

He looked round. Except for the two of them and a sleepy ticket-collector in a box some distance away, the station was empty, and Charles decided to make it emptier still. He strode away. At the entrance, curiosity compelled him to turn. There were a few people outside viewing the shop windows near the entrance. He looked back into the station and started. Mr. Mundon was marching towards the stairway carrying in his arms a small dog. Charles's jaw dropped and he stared fascinated while his friend, wearing a smile of conscious rectitude, descended happily and proudly down the stairway, carrying his dog.

At a bookstall an old lady was staring unbelievably at the end of a dogless lead that trailed behind her. A taxi was passing. Charles dived into it.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF HOW MR. MUNDON TALKED APPLES.

'A Mr. Mundon will be calling here to-day,' said Mr. Whittle, putting a letter down beside him on the breakfast-table.

'And who,' asked Jane, 'is Mr. Mundon?'

'An American apple grower I met when I was in London. He tells—'

'Oh, apples!' said Jane, dismissing the subject with a shrug.

'He tells me that Whittle's Orange Pippin is very well thought of over there.'

'I thought you couldn't get it taken up at all?'

'No. Nevertheless, it seems that specimens have been sent to that country and that the apple has caused considerable attention.'

'But how nice! What's Mr. Mundon coming for?'

'We had little time to exchange views in London, so I suggested that if he ever came this way he should call in and see me. He is an American, of course, and—if you happen to be here at the time—you will probably find his speech and manner peculiar; rougher, more expressive perhaps than ours, not always easy to understand.'

'Darling, I've met hundreds of them—a lot more than you have. How old is he?'

'In the neighbourhood of fifty, I should imagine.'

'Oh!' said Jane, losing interest.

'From your tone, my dear,' said Mr. Whittle, looking disapprovingly at his daughter, 'I gather that you were prepared to have been interested in this American if he had been younger?'

'Well . . . I might have given him the once over.'

'But surely an engaged girl should not be interested in other young men.'

Jane thought rather regretfully of a certain Charles Wilburton, who seemed to have faded from the landscape. 'I don't know,' she said after a pause. 'I think being engaged interests a girl in the breed generally. Tom making love to her, you see, makes her wonder how Dick would do it, and, in his turn, Harry. Each young man has his own methods, father. It's frightfully interesting.'

'I don't like to hear you talk like this, my dear. I know you don't mean it. I know—'

'But I do mean it.'

'Surely, Jane, Hubert Chipping has now a right to your undivided attention!'

'Well . . . Hubert is very brainy, I know, and I admire him. But his methods of making love are pretty foul.'

'Foul?'

'Wet.'

'The fact that he loves you is all that matters.'

'The other counts too—ask any girl.'

'In what respects does Hubert Chipping fail?'

'He's so serious.'

'A trait definitely in his favour.'

'There's nothing dashing or exciting about him.'

'Nevertheless, I feel sure that a marriage between you and him will turn out a success. His father is one of the few friends

I have in this part. His property is considerable and Hubert himself is, I understand, a clever and rising young man. I never read novels, but his father assures me a literary career of considerable promise lies before his son.'

'He *is* clever. And I *do* admire cleverness—because neither of us,' she added maliciously, 'have got much of it. But why do you mention his father's property? You've got tons, haven't you? It's not necessary for me to marry money, I hope, because I tell you frankly that aspect of it does not appeal to me at all.'

'No, no,' said Mr. Whittle hastily. 'Money does not enter into the question. While I cannot boast of possessing the "tons" you mention, I think you will be sufficiently well provided for. My reasons for desiring this alliance are to safeguard you from making one of the many unfortunate marriages that are contracted in these restless days. I realise that you must marry, and with your romantic, impulsive temperament, I feared that your affections might be given to some unworthy person—in short, adventurer. I have worked hard, my dear, all my life, and it is no part of my plans that the money I have accumulated should keep some gay Lothario in idleness and luxury.'

'Nor of mine,' said Jane, with a tightening of her mouth. 'I know what you're getting at, father; you're thinking of Donald Mowbray. It was only a schoolgirl affair—everyone has them.'

'That affair certainly gave me some uneasiness at the time, but, to be quite frank, I was thinking rather of the man, Dexborough.'

Jane reddened. 'That's not fair, father,' she said. 'That was all gone into before, and I admitted I'd been a fool. The man *was* an adventurer and I *was* in love with him. Isn't that enough without keeping raking it up?'

'I am sorry to hurt you. All the same I have felt considerably easier in my mind since your engagement to Hubert. There is little standard left these days and Hubert belongs to the only solid class—those who have a holding of land and property.'

'All of which means nothing to me,' said Jane. 'I don't want any clod-hopping sons of respectable land-owners. Hubert has brains, and *that's* what I think counts. And he does need someone to look after him. He says he's miserable without me, father.'

'Whatever reasons prompt you to marry him, I am content so long as you do marry him.'

'Father . . . if a man writes a book—one book, I suppose he is clever? I mean, he needn't be a talker as well?'

'A talker does not necessarily have brains—rather the reverse. As regards the book, a lot depends on the contents.'

'Very modern.'

'Not a lucid description. Does the work give food for thought? Is it deep, painstaking, erudite?'

'In a way.'

'That Hubert *has* adopted writing as his profession argues a thoughtful mind.'

The expected guest did not arrive that morning. Nor did he arrive that afternoon. It was shortly before dinner, when Jane was changing after taking Mogul for a walk and Mr. Whittle was in the drawing-room, that Dorothy gave the glad news.

'Gentleman to see you, sir,' she said, poking her head into the room.

'Ah! That will be—'

'Mr. Mundon, sir.'

'Show him in, Dorothy.'

Mr. Mundon, however, needed no showing in. Where he visited, he visited. He waited on no doorsteps, he lingered in no vestibules. He had found it did not pay. There had been those to whom Mr. Mundon's genial, bluff and hearty ways had not appealed; those whom his methods of selling shares in rich mines had failed to attract; those, in short, who wished to keep the blighter out at any cost. By walking straight in as soon as the door was opened he had found that he saw people the quicker and the more certainly. So it had become a habit.

Dorothy, turning to go back and fetch him, collided with him, and after a couple of words to herself turned round again and announced him. 'Mr. Mundon, sir.' She closed the door, muttered a couple of words more, and left the visitor wringing Mr. Whittle's unwilling hand as if it were a pump-handle on a foundering ship.

'Well, well!' he said. 'Well, well, well!' clapping his host on the back and then taking a chair. 'Mr. Whittle, this is a real pleasure, believe me. And here,' he added, looking round the room as if it were a shrine, 'is where Whittle's—er—huh—huh, was invented! Well, well!'

'You refer to my apple?'

'You bet your life. And what's more, Mr. Whittle, I'm going

to refer to it again. When it comes to apples you don't catch George P. Mundon referring to anything else. Now what was the name of the darned thing ?'

'You mean Whittle's Orange Pippin ?'

'I mean just that. And considering the quantities I raised it's queer me forgettin' the name. I guess it's doo to the accident.'

'You have had an accident ?'

'Just the auto—car I should say. Broke down one mile from here. Gave a cough and a spit and called it a day.'

'You mean the car won't—in fact, won't go ?'

'I mean that little thing. It won't go. Barring that, sir, it's a hundred per cent. efficient.'

'What was the cause of the breakdown ?'

'Now there,' said Mr. Mundon confidently, 'you have me. I know all the make-up of an apple. Pips, core, eats, skin, and stalk—there's nothing hid ; but with an auto I'm like the ten tribes of Israel. Sho-foor says maybe it's a broken oil pipe or maybe a seized auxiliary pin—he don't know.'

'This is most unfortunate. So you had to walk a mile to get here ?'

'Yah. I left my feller takin' the auto to bits, and come on here.'

'Then doubtless he will discover what is wrong and effect a repair in time for you to return. In the meantime, Mr.—er—Mundon, I hope you will dine with us.'

'De-lighted. And talking about the automobile, it's not booked to return yet. No, sir. I'm on my way to see a man at a place called Clayworth. Maybe you know the berg ?'

'I know the name.'

'I've waited one hour with that apology for an auto ; then, seeing it gets no further towards going, I leaves it and tells Ely—Ely being the sho-foor—to come on with it here when it's good and ready and not before.'

Jane entered. Mr. Mundon, that mirror of politeness, removed his hat, placed it on the piano, and rose to his feet.

'My daughter, Mr. Mundon.'

'Pleased to meet you, Miss Whittle. Proud to make your acquaintance.'

'I hear you've come to talk apples with father,' said Jane brightly. 'He's been looking forward to seeing you.'

'Mr. Mundon has had a breakdown with his car, Jane,' said

her father, 'and has walked on here. He is on his way to Clayworth.'

'What happened to the car?'

'Miss Whittle, as I was telling your pa, the innards of autos is my weak subject. If so be I got two marks in an automobile test paper them two would be for handwriting.'

In another quarter of an hour, washed and comparatively spruce, Mr. Mundon sat down to dinner. He was battling bravely against heavy odds, for Mr. Whittle was talking apples and he was finding it harder than he had expected. He had looked up 'Apple' in the dictionary, and found the illuminating description, 'The fruit of the apple tree.' Rightly suspecting that this would not carry him far with one of Mr. Whittle's calibre he had looked up an encyclopædia and there learnt that the apple, or fruit of the apple tree (an important point this, evidently), was of the species *Pyrus Malus* belonging to the sub-order *Pomaceæ*, that it originated from the *P. prunifolia* or Wild Crab and was first cultivated in Britain at the time of the Roman occupation. Mr. Whittle, however, seemed strangely unimpressed by the *P. prunifolia* or Wild Crab and still less by the fact that the apple was cultivated in Britain at the time of the Roman occupation. Fortunately, for the most part, he delivered a monologue and Mr. Mundon was only called upon for polite remarks denoting intelligent interest, such as, 'Bet your darned life!' 'You've hit it plumb,' and 'You've spoke a mouthful.'

'My method,' rambled on Mr. Whittle, 'in raising specimens is to enclose the stigma in fine muslin after the anthers have been removed and to introduce the pollen of the selected cross at an early period.'

'Sure,' said Mr. Mundon.

'In America, I understand, a finer cover than muslin is used?'

'You've said it! The finer the better.'

'In your own case, Mr. Mundon, have you ever had any success when cross-pollinating self-fertile varieties?'

'Not a darned bit.'

'Really! I find that if the anthers are removed sufficiently early, self-fertile varieties take as well as the self-sterile.'

'Sure—if you take the anthers off quick enough. Trouble with me, I never do. Every blessed time I say, "Now darn it! there's them anthers not took off again!"'

Mr. Whittle looked hard at his guest. Americans, he knew,

were hard to understand. Their modes of expressing themselves, their wealth of allusion, left an ordinary unversed Englishman like himself in the dark. But this man seemed more unintelligible than most. Still—he must persevere. There were many points he wished to discuss with an American grower.

‘In dealing with seedlings,’ he continued, ‘how long do you wait before making your graft?’

Mr. Mundon looked up eagerly. The conversation seemed to be veering at last into regions with which he was familiar. This apple business was evidently not *all* foolishness.

‘Graft?’ he said.

Mr. Whittle nodded.

‘When it comes to graft,’ said Mr. Mundon animatedly, ‘I’m on the spot good and early. Make your graft while you can is George P.’s motto. Once you’ve made it, you’ve got something. You may or may not be able to sit down and make more. But you’ve made something. Yes, *sir*.’

Mr. Whittle thought this out. Jane gave a swift look at the guest, then devoted her attention to her plate, smiling a little from time to time.

‘I take it, then,’ said Mr. Whittle at length, ‘that you favour an early graft.’

‘Decidedly. The earlier the better.’

‘You say also you go in for making more grafts afterwards. Does this mean you believe in double grafting?’

‘It does. And treble if you can wangle it.’

‘Apparently, then, you attach much more importance to grafting in America than we do here?’

‘You’ve said it!’

‘Yet I cannot see how you can better a simple graft on the Paradise or Metz stock.’

Mr. Mundon gulped. His enthusiasm at hearing such a homely, beautiful word as ‘graft’ arise out of the welter of unintelligible pomological phrases had run away with him. Apparently this Philistine had been using the word, not in its right and proper sense, but as applied to some damned apple process. He felt the indignation of the purist at hearing a word misapplied. He felt also a sense of uneasiness. He was treading perilous paths. You take a thing like an apple, and darn gosh! what was it? Just a thing you ate, with a core you flung into the fire or at the cat, whichever was handiest. The dictionary was right: ‘The fruit

of the apple tree'—that was all there was to it. Yet here was this old crayfish spiling yards about pollination, anthers, and other rubbish. It was wrong. It oughtn't to be allowed.

And then Jane spoke. It was like the voice of duty calling Mr. Mundon back to the narrow path, steeling him to continue with the arduous work; to hold on. 'Mogul,' she said, speaking to her father, 'was coughing when he came back from his walk this afternoon. I shan't take him out this evening.'

'Very well, my dear. Mogul,' he explained to his guest, 'is a mastiff belonging to my daughter. I believe he is considered one of the finest examples of the breed in Britain.'

'Fancy that!' said Mr. Mundon.

'He gets a first everywhere,' said Jane. 'In a way, he's almost *too* good for a place like this. There have been several attempts to steal him.'

'That's bad!'

'We daren't keep him outside in the kennels where the other dogs are. He has to sleep in the house behind locked doors.'

'Too hard! So you keeps him in your bedroom?'

'Not in my *bedroom*. He's much too big. There's a spare room on the ground floor. He has his bed there.'

'And if any guy went in *there* I guess he'd get chewed up?' said Mr. Mundon, leaning forward to get the answer.

'Unfortunately, in a way,' said Mr. Whittle, 'such is not the case. The dog is of exceedingly gentle and trustful disposition.'

'I guess he's sure a fine dog,' said Mr. Mundon, leaning back. 'So you locks your door at nights and lets him out in the morning?'

'Yes. At least, we shut his door—the house is locked up, of course.'

'That's fine,' said Mr. Mundon, speaking the truth from his point of view. He had been wondering how to get the necessary information about Mogul's night-quarters, and here it was being thrust on him. He might be being coached by a crammer. He felt he could talk apples now all night. Things were turning out well. All that remained was to get an invitation to stay over, and the theft of Mogul was as good as done.

(To be continued.)

A LIBRARY OF TO-DAY.

BY JAMES MILNE.

If you will come with me I will introduce you to a Waterloo of English books, truly a great victory in the spread of reading among all classes of people in this country. It has no stricken field, this place near the familiar station of Waterloo, in the tidal heart of London; nothing but what is fair and well, comforting and heartening. For that reason it can the better take its part in the 'liquid history' of the Thames, because it is on its southern bank, within range, moreover, of the ancient soil which we associate with Shakespeare and his plays.

He would have been vastly interested in Boots Book-lovers' Library, which has its headquarters airily between Stamford Street and London's river. It rises high among other high buildings, as if, like a Gothic church, it has a message from the earth to the heavens. That Jacob's ladder consists of books, and the building of it is as interesting a story of our time as you could wish to be told. Not less interesting is an inside account of this democratic and far-flung library, and indeed that has not been available before.

Story and impression were about me as I spent a good part of a recent afternoon with Mr. F. R. Richardson, the well-known Chief Librarian of 'Boots,' to give it the shortened name by which it is called in the London book world. He has been at the head of it for twenty-four years, has tended its growth and development, and knows every pulse of it with intimacy, for a great circulating library is a living, sentient thing, as we shall see.

My memory goes back over the years to a personal meeting I once had in London with the remarkable man who was Jesse Boot, and became the first Baron Trent. He was a martyr to rheumatoid arthritis, and he was lying on his back in a long wheeled chair, hardly able to move a hand. But if physically laid low, there was high vitality in his face, especially in the eyes and the forehead; and his voice was vigorous and persuasive. He made one feel at ease, was keen to talk about books and their growing place in modern life, and generally he charmed away the natural first impression I had of being in the presence of an invalid.

Jesse Boot! His name stands for a life-work blended with an unusual romance, for he yoked commerce and literature together and got them to go beautifully. Why not? Food for the body! Food for the mind! Were they not only natural companions but complementary to each other? Give people nourishment for the mind and they would also take away food—or medicine—for the body, if they found it handy, under the same roof.

Maybe this theory, eventually worked out in practice, was in the mind of Jesse Boot even as a young man in Nottingham. He was born there exactly at the middle of the last century, when things Victorian, according to the bright, young view of to-day, were at their dullest and stodgiest. His father was a herbalist with a shop from which he sold his wares to folk unable to afford a doctor, for the era of the 'panel' was very far away. He probably also peddled his healing herbs and pills about the country around Nottingham, and, being a person who read and had ideas, he preached on Sundays in village chapels. Altogether he would, in a humble way, have been a sort of Victorian John Hampden who gave individuality and character to the ordinary things of life, particularly as he made books and reading part of it.

Father and son! It is a simple matter to trace the inheritance which the one left the other of intelligent curiosity, human understanding, and the desire to work vigorously and achieve fruitfully. Necessarily there was a fine mother who also passed on qualities of her own to Jesse, for when he was still only a boy of fourteen the father died and he had to run the herbal shop for her. Thus occupied, he grew up stoutly, like the business which, from its tiny source, has become the present huge concern of cash chemists; and just there one recalls that old John Newbery traded gift-books and medicinal powders across his counter in St. Paul's Churchyard.

Possibly it was a woman of insight and foresight, now Dowager Lady Trent, who, in the career of Jesse Boot, stood for the definite turn towards a lending library. She was Miss Florence Rowe, daughter of a bookseller in Jersey; she was married to Jesse Boot when he was in the mid-thirties, and to them at Nottingham came the joy of three children. Husband and wife both had a natural taste for reading, and her knowledge of her father's bookshop in Jersey suggested a way of action.

Why not establish a little lending library alongside the chemist's stock? It would not be much trouble, it would bring extra visitors,

and it could be done at the price of twopence a volume. Just now we hear much of the 'tuppenny libraries' which are engirdling the country, but there is hardly anything absolutely new. The present upgrowth of them is, apparently, finding a public in the crowd of people whom the paper-back story, at threepence and sixpence, used to serve, and this is good for the cause of literature because it teaches a love of books.

A lending library, however small, needs to be refreshed with new books, and towards the end of the eighteen-nineties orders for second-hand volumes came frequently to the big London libraries, over the name 'Florence Boot.' This was noticed and noted by one of Mudie's alert young men, Mr. Mercer Stretch, and eventually he submitted to Mr. and Mrs. Boot the suggestion that they should carry their small lending library into a big lending library operating through the rising string of drug stores.

One book at a time, a modest annual subscription, an easy method of exchange for borrowers, open shelves, comfortable surroundings in which to pick and choose! It seems all very simple to us, but it was revolutionary in its linking of business and literature, as contrasted with the traditional and perhaps 'high-brow' lineage of the old English circulating library.

Democratic, direct! Those were the watchwords of Boots Book-lovers' Library from the hour it took formal shape in the year 1900, when Mr. Mercer Stretch became its first librarian at Nottingham. A year later it moved its headquarters to London, down Farringdon Road way, and between then and now it has had three Chief Librarians, all good men and true as real librarians must be. Mr. Mercer Stretch found an accomplished and zealous assistant and then successor in Mr. W. J. Roberts who had been at Iredale's in Torquay, and who is also known for his topographical writings and his beautiful photographs of the English countryside. He, in turn, was followed by Mr. Richardson who had his training at Mitchell's Library in Bond Street, where Queen Victoria bought books. Rather they were ordered for her by Mr. Richard Holmes, her Royal Librarian, mostly around Christmas, being meant as gifts.

'Mitchell's,' like the 'Grosvenor' and other select libraries of the time in the West End, was the resort of people of fashion who also had brains, a combination once so common that it was not remarked on. 'Good readers indeed,' recalled Mr. Richardson, but it was beyond his memory to tell me what books, in par-

ticular, went from 'Mitchell's' to Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. Anyhow with them went also a library service for the Royal Household, though, maybe, it was less comprehensive than that commanded by the familiar paper-knife which betokens membership of Boots Book-lovers' Library.

With its green tab, it brings forth, almost as miraculously as Aaron's stroke on the rock, the latest new book from a 'Boots' shelf anywhere in the land. You may be a subscriber in Aberdeen, but if, on business or holiday, you find yourself in any other part of the country, you can change the book you have finished for another, and take it home. Nay, if you like, you can exchange books a dozen times at the 'Boots' branch nearest to any point in your journey.

We may justly regard a venture like this as a public, even a national movement, because it is an hour-by-hour and day-by-day influence upon the national life. It is, in its fashion, comparable to the popular newspaper except that it moves softly, almost silently; and, that being said, let us see the justification for saying it. As Robert Burns wrote, ages ahead of a circulating library which would have been a God-send to him:

Facts are chieils that winna' ding
And daurna' be disputed.

During a year it buys hundreds of thousands of volumes of new literature—fact, fiction and the other forms of writing which make books. No fewer than 700,000 volumes are handled every month at the headquarters in Stamford Street, a tremendous business. This is the clearer when it is added that the in-and-out traffic of a year runs to 8,000,000 volumes, or even more. 'Prodeegious!' Sir Walter Scott's Dominie Samson would have exclaimed, and he would have been right, but what would he say to the further figure that the book exchanges for the whole library, in the space of a year, exceed 35,000,000?

These authoritative statistics tell of a huge reading public, always of books printed in English, for no others are circulated. Publishers, like farmers, are apt to grumble, but it is cheery news that since it came into being, Boots Book-lovers' Library has bought over 30,000,000 copies of new books. It has 390 branches in England, Scotland and Wales—Ireland it has not invaded—and between those and Stamford Street it employs 1,500 people who are all trained experts in their several lines of

library work. Whenever possible, the staffs in branches are recruited locally, and if, to fill a job, a stranger has to be brought in, that stranger is well enough salaried to be comfortable in the away-from-home surroundings.

Necessarily there is a school of thought, a gospel as of a Bible, a modern catechism of faith, behind an institution as thriving and as spacious. This code is even chronicled in a series of circular letters which, now and then revised and brought up to date, go among its chief office-bearers. It lays stress on maintaining the proved principles and conduct upon which the library has risen, on the importance of the human touch in method and on many other matters, all germane to success and progress and reputation. The eventual lesson of this gentle yet intensive schooling is always that the English reading public be provided with what it wants.

It would be easy to buy so many books of so many sorts and then say, 'Now come along and make your choice from them.' 'Boots' tries, directly and through the antennæ of its many branches, to discover trends and tendencies of reading and then to forestall them. Experienced 'readers' are also employed to sample forthcoming works and report on them to the high chair of the Chief Librarian. He wants to know the plot of a novel, what its characters are like, what subjects it explores, and how well or ill it is written. He has definite references, compiled by the organisation, as to the public demand for books on subjects like biography, travel, topography, history, sociology, or *belles-lettres*. All this guides him in his buying, as it also instructs him in the psychology of the massed English reader, and he passes his knowledge on to his scattered librarians, every one of them seeking, seeking, for the fresh reaction of the public.

Monday is 'buying day' at Stamford Street and then many thousand volumes will be ordered to meet the needs of the branches. No wonder that in London publishing houses the first post of Tuesday morning is awaited with interest for what it may bring along. It has even been known that publishers, otherwise bent, perhaps, on luncheon or golf, have remained resolutely in their offices until they heard about the 'Boots' order for the week. Reviews in the Sunday papers, or rather in two of them, have been found to have a distinct influence on the desire of subscribers for particular books, and that takes us to the process of 'subscribing,' by which is meant the submission by a publisher of a new work.

It is seen and so many copies are ordered, then these are received, and next they are labelled in five places and wired for the membership token. The book is now distributed to all the branches of the library in proportion to the number of subscribers they each have. After this their direct requests are awaited and the copies available everywhere are changed about to meet the orders from everywhere. Finally more copies are bought if the success of the book makes that necessary, but none is ever specially pushed, that being a law abiding with 'Boots,' like the laws of the Medes and Persians.

The staff work is such that at noon every day there comes to the Chief Librarian a portfolio which tells him the exact state of affairs, at headquarters and in the branches, at the closing hour of the previous evening, and he can instantly compare it with the situation on any previous date. He knows of the new subscriptions paid, their class, period and the number of volumes covered. He knows how many books have been bought, and the nature of them, and what orders have been received and despatched in the busy traffic with branches. He is informed as to the disposition of second-hand copies, and indeed about everything, for, in a business of such magnitude, it is necessary that the facts which figures tell should be constantly under review. He can run his finger and his mind over tables of the books damaged or lost, for those things will happen in a library, however well it be regulated.

Sometimes people take away more books than they should, out of love of them, and afterwards forget to return them. Persons have been known to do this, who otherwise are examples of virtue, and the most glaring case, if it were told, would read like an extravaganza. 'Boots' has its own stories, but it only whispers them, because it is acquainted with all the frailties of the human comedy and tragedy, and it allows for these, even when they are ill to bear.

Walk upstairs with me and you come to a Hall of Books, where you may watch the keys of the whole delicate machine governing it and speeding it up. Here there is a Street of Books so long that you can hardly see the end of it and it is flanked on both sides by innumerable alleys also holding a multitude of volumes in tall cases. It is all a most impressive sight and to a man of bookish tastes and habits it is suggestive of romantic and pertinent questions.

Where do those books, countless apparently as the sands of the desert, come from? Where do they go? How many of real

quality have missed the market of success, a saddening thought? What adventures have others had since they were written, and timidly or bravely launched into literary space? Alive they are, for the printed word does not die when it is cared for, and young men and women move hither and thither in attendance on these.

Shall we, guided by our friend the Chief Librarian, visit a few of the strategical points, as they may be called, of the Hall of Books? One department does its job to the unseen slogan, 'Inward from branches and distribution again within half an hour.' Consignments go to branches twice a week and twice a week consignments come back, and there is always the urgent despatch. Another department works on the text, 'Inward from publishers and distribution to branches in anticipation of demand.' A third is devoted to 'Collation of orders,' which means clerical work needing nimble hands, clear heads, and the ever-present system.

Next we have the arena, for it is almost that, where second-hand volumes make a traffic of as many as 650,000 in a year. They have served their time in the army for which they were enlisted, and now they are sold off to small libraries, or to public libraries, both of which have to buy economically, or it may be to individual customers. Still another corner of the Hall of Books is a sort of literary infirmary, for it houses volumes whose covers have been worn out with reading and have been rebound. Are they also sold off?

Not in the first place, anyhow, for they have their special mission in relation to the opening of new branches. These are stocked with them, as a branch has to have books at once and because fuller access to them will bring out gradually what sort of reading is wanted in a particular locality. Thus, like the bedstead in Oliver Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, they have a 'double debt to pay' and they do it. Perhaps this particular force might be named the army of pioneers, for it marches forth to 'blaze' and prepare the way, and its yearly strength, as counted in the 'Boots' bindery at Nottingham, is about 250,000 volumes, rank and file.

Necessarily, having seen so many things in this wonderland of books beside the Thames, I had some wondering thoughts about English readers and reading at large; so I expressed them and was answered. Novels, of course, are the supreme vogue and good ones by writers with a substantial name circulate from six

to eight months. Merely recreational or amusing stories by authors, also well known, have the lesser life of from four to six months, and those by unknown or comparatively unknown people do not usually go beyond three or four months, though there are exceptions to every average.

The 'good story,' with all the characteristics which the term implies, is one of these exceptions and perhaps that may cause our young bloods and young maidens of authorship to pause by the literary way and consider whether they are really writing stories when they fail to provide a plot and present a score of characters without creating any of them. Pretty chatter and patter about nobodies and nothing in particular may be decorative, but what the English reader, select or unselect, wants and seeks every time is a good yarn. In his search for it he is sometimes driven to the detective tale, because it has to be really a story.

Something pleasantly human goes down with the great multitude, something even domestic, though that may sound old-fashioned, and always something plotted and planned in the sense of Wilkie Collins or Charles Reade. After all most folk read to be refreshed, comforted or interested, and the eternal themes of life and death are what they seek for and definitely will have. Ever the library sounding-board signals such messages from the general reader as, 'I may not be a sophisticated person, but I know what I like,' or 'Only good quality and human interest will be read.'

Biography, autobiography and travel follow fiction in popularity with 'Boots' readers and they also read in accordance with the merits of their authorship and their subjects of appeal. The more colourful and dramatic style in which serious books are now written has brought them within the appreciation of the mass reader, to whatever rank of society he or she belongs. Years ago a biography was apt to be so much raw material strung loosely together for whoever cared to wander through it. It rather had the air of a funeral to which only relatives were invited, because they only were interested. To-day, thanks largely to the example and teaching of Lytton Strachey, it has to be a wrought portrait, human, anecdotal, approachable and understandable, or it does not go far.

'Boots' confirms the view, found everywhere in the London book world, that poetry is in poor demand with the generation eager and dominant in reading, but essays, which may be prose

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poetry, have a really good hold. Also the reading note is more serious in the North of England and in Scotland than it is in the South, which demonstrates once again that climate affects our choice of books, as it affects everything we do. It is only natural that the page for 'underneath the bough' in the sunny South should be lighter than the page for the fireside in the cool North. You smile in the sunshine, but take refuge in inward thought where there is none.

Was it not Mr. Rudyard Kipling who said that the secret of success lies chiefly in how to eliminate the unessential? It is certainly the secret of the short story, of which he is the greatest living English master. Likewise, it is a cardinal, never-forgotten principle in the 'daily round, the common task' of Boots Book-lovers' Library. Comprehend the taste of the reading public and meet it as healthily and sympathetically as it shows itself, always keeping the house-flag of name and reputation flying high in the literary breeze. Bring the likely book and the prospective reader closer and closer in communion and friendship and there will follow the happy companionship for which literature should stand.

Give ear to the verbal contacts between the branch librarians and their borrowers and attention to the many letters of thanks which tumble into the post-box at Stamford Street. Nor neglect the occasional grumbles, though, to be sure, the grumbler speaks for himself only, while he who writes to praise, speaks for a hundred silent voices. Obviously no library can supply any or every book the moment it is demanded, but say what your individual reading is and a supply of it shall be yours. Above all, the reader is the library and the library is the reader and what is so knit together let both keep together in mutual accord. It is all a high achievement and adventure even for a Chief Librarian who has been a chief architect of Boots Book-lovers' Library.

MR. SPRIGGS AND THE CRANE.

BY PETER SCOTT.

'Do you know,' said Mr. Spriggs, who was the district registrar's clerk, 'that it's the child next door's birthday?' 'Oh,' said Mrs. Spriggs, and there the matter dropped. She didn't even say 'Do you mean that horrid little brat that screams all the time?' nor did she say 'How do you know?' She just said 'Oh,' because she was not interested in children. It was a source of unhappiness to Mr. Spriggs, for he believed that he would make an ideal father. He had a way with dogs and other animals and he was sure that he had a way, too, with children, but—well, there it was—Mrs. Spriggs was not interested in children.

Mr. Spriggs glanced across the breakfast-table to his wife. She was a good wife, she had made him a nice home. His eyes wandered round the room. The pictures were nice—they were in nice frames and the wall-paper was nice: the lace curtains were nice and the little potted fern too; Mrs. Spriggs had heard there was some joke about having an aspidistra, so she had a feathery fern instead. It was all very cosy, the perfect front room of the perfect suburban villa.

And to the outside world, to the other inhabitants of Mount-view Avenue, Mr. Spriggs seemed to be as happily married as any man could be.

Indeed so he was. But there was always just that one thing that weighed upon his mind—however, Mrs. Spriggs was not interested in children, so that was that.

It was by pure chance that Mr. Spriggs had happened to see the registration of the birth of the little boy next door. He had been turning the pages of the register the day before and his eye had caught an address which was so near to his own that he had read the particulars 'born 15th June, 1928'—so the child would be three.

And now it was his birthday. As Mr. Spriggs put on his drab raincoat, which he always wore to go to the office, no matter if it were midsummer, and his woolly grey soft hat, the seed of an idea was sown in his mind: as he passed down the narrow hall and

opened the front door it began to germinate: and as he reached the garden gate at the end of the little gravel path, which he had so carefully rolled the night before, it had blossomed forth, for looking back he caught a glimpse, up the little yard which separated the house next door, of a pair of tiny knickers hanging from the clothes line and waving in the wind.

Mr. Spriggs left his office half an hour early that afternoon. He obtained special leave, for the seed was beginning to bear fruit in his mind. So he made his way in the direction of a toy shop which he dimly remembered to have seen from the 'bus.

In his pocket he had a ten-shilling note, but he couldn't possibly spend more than half of that. Five shillings would be the extreme limit, and even then if his wife should ever hear of it—Mr. Spriggs shuddered, for Mrs. Spriggs abhorred sentimentality.

A few minutes later he reached the shop. He paused before going in. The window was full—so full that no space could be found anywhere, behind the seven-foot-high plate glass, that did not hold a toy; there was everything there from a model motor that could be pedalled like a bicycle, to a beetle on a roller which walked slowly along when you first ran it backwards.

Mr. Spriggs wondered how one began. His inclination would be to look round until he saw something nice—but he mustn't plunge in too soon without a moment's thought. His wife would of course classify the possible birthday presents into:

- (a) Mechanical toys—cars, ships, areoplanes.
- (b) Sentimental toys—teddy bears, etc., of purely emotional value.
- (c) Intellectual toys—Mr. Spriggs couldn't think of any, but he was sure that would be one of them—it was one of his wife's 'words.'
- (d) Dangerous toys—etc., etc.

And then she would cross-classify with suitability to age and finally eliminate with price. That is to say she would do all that if she ever bought a toy, which of course she wouldn't.

Mr. Spriggs started to classify:

- (a) Mechanical toys:

'Model trains—No. 0 gauge—circular track in 10 pieces—one set points—engine and three carriages—engine looks like nothing on earth.

'No. 1 gauge—track in 15 pieces—2 sets points. Engine still looks like nothing on earth.

'No. 2 gauge. Oval track in 20 pieces with circular siding—' How could he remember the particular merit of each one? It was impossible. He started to classify more freely and in less detail, but he felt he was skimping it, and went back to No. 3 gauge. Now of course his wife would write the details down—after all he only had to copy them off the lid of either of the two show specimens. Where was his pencil? He tried each pocket, oh well, if he hadn't got a pencil—and anyway he didn't want to buy a train.

Mr. Spriggs took the plunge. He opened the door and shut it again rapidly behind him, for a powerful electric bell nearly deafened him. It sounded just like his alarm clock!

There was no need for it either, because an imposing-looking woman was sitting at the cash desk, who could not have failed to see even the unobtrusive Mr. Spriggs enter. She called 'Miss Harris—*Shop*' and went on reading her novel.

A moment later Miss Harris appeared. Mr. Spriggs was a little shy. It was two against one. However, he decided to broach the subject confidentially, so he said:

'I wonder if you can suggest a suitable birthday toy for a little boy of three.'

'Have you thought of a train?' said Miss Harris.

'Yes—I don't think I want a train.'

'Well, what about a tricycle.'

'Oh,' said Mr. Spriggs—'well, I wasn't thinking of anything quite so expensive—I don't want to spend more than four or five shillings at the most.'

'Oh, I see! Well, how about soldiers?' suggested Miss Harris.

'Can I see some?'

A moment later she brought a long flat box. Inside were two rows of scarlet-coated guardsmen in heroic attitudes, all made of lead, and painted. They were tied round the neck and round the feet by a strand of white cotton to a sheet of cardboard.

Mr. Spriggs didn't like them much; they looked so undignified when their heads came off, he remembered.

Now he would give Miss Harris one last chance. . . .

'Have you thought of an intellectual toy?' she suggested.

Mr. Spriggs gasped—and then asked what kind of a toy was intellectual.

'Oh, a rag book or some kind of a puzzle.'

'No, I don't want an intellectual toy, thank you,' he said.

Suddenly Mr. Spriggs bethought him of a new method. So far he had tried 'classification' and 'confidence in the saleswoman' and both had failed him. Now his mind travelled swiftly back forty years to his very earliest memories. What sort of toys had he had. There had been a lovely singing top.

'Have you a singing top?' he asked.

'No. I'm afraid we haven't, but we could get one in by next week,' said Miss Harris.

Again Mr. Spriggs thought. Dimly he saw two children, the one lowering various articles from the first-floor window to the other in the garden, by means of a crane.

'Have you a crane?' he asked.

'Well, there's this one,' and she showed him a contraption of tin made in two halves which were clipped together.

'Have you a better one?'

'No, I'm afraid we haven't,' she said.

'Look in the second drawer on the left of the string box,' said the woman from the cash desk in a voice of thunder. Miss Harris looked, fumbled in the drawer, and then produced a large box. On the lid, in bright colours, was a lively scene from the Southampton docks: a crane was unloading cargo from a huge steamer, dockyard hands were running hither and thither carrying bales and baskets on their heads, and goods trucks were waiting on a railway siding to receive their loads. Mr. Spriggs drank in the scene and then Miss Harris opened the box. Within lay a beautiful crane. Mr. Spriggs lifted it gently out. If you turned the handle, it pulled up the string. And not only that, but it was geared down so that you turned fast and the string came up slowly. At the end of the string was a weight and a hook. Mr. Spriggs set it up on the counter and lowered the hook to the floor.

'These are loads which can be pulled up,' said Miss Harris, pointing to three little sand-bags which were in a separate compartment in the box. Mr. Spriggs put one on the hook and then hauled it up.

'How do you turn the whole crane?' he asked.

'With this handle. The whole platform revolves,' said Miss Harris.

Mr. Spriggs tried the handle. It didn't turn.

'I think it's jammed,' he said.

Miss Harris tried it, but still it didn't turn.

'Have you another one?' asked Mr. Spriggs.

'I think so'—again Miss Harris fumbled in the drawer and emerged with another 'scene at Southampton docks' which contained another crane.

Mr. Spriggs tried its handles. They both worked.

'Good,' he said, 'I think I'll take that one.'

'Anything else?' asked Miss Harris.

'No.'

And Miss Harris began to pack up the crane in brown paper, and had just folded in the ends, when Mr. Spriggs suddenly remembered the financial part of the transaction.

'How much is it?'

'Eight and six,' said Miss Harris.

'Oh,' said Mr. Spriggs. Of course it was a beautiful crane, but—well, he had said he would only pay five shillings. And what *would* his wife say if she heard he had spent eight and six, and it would be worse if she heard that he had meant only to spend five shillings, but had been weak-minded. No, he wouldn't have the crane. How did one break the news gently, when it was already packed up?

'I'm—I'm not sure,' he began, 'that it's exactly what I want after all.'

But Miss Harris had turned away to the string box and had not heard him. And at that moment Mr. Spriggs's eye lit upon the clock. It was half-past five. The child would be going to bed in about half an hour. He must hurry.

'Pay at the desk, please,' said Miss Harris.

'One and sixpence change,' murmured the imposing-looking woman, and a moment later Mr. Spriggs was in the street with a huge brown-paper parcel under his arm.

After five minutes' walk Mr. Spriggs became one of the crowd that stood on the pavement waiting for the 'bus. And when the 'bus came he was one of the crowd that pushed and shoved to get in, and when the 'bus went, he was one of the crowd that remained on the pavement!

But he caught the next 'bus, and climbed up to the top. There was no room there and when the conductor came up, he sent Mr. Spriggs down because it was strictly forbidden to stand on the top of a 'bus: 'the Company accepted no liability for injuries caused,' etc., etc. Mr. Spriggs went down and stood inside the 'bus.

He was very hot and bothered, for you must not forget that it was midsummer, and all the time he clutched, under his arm, his huge brown-paper parcel.

At length he found a seat and wedged himself between a fat old woman and the end of the 'bus. First he laid the parcel across his knees, but the old woman complained that the corners were too sharp and were sticking into her ; so that he put it longways ; but at the next stopping-place another woman caught her parasol on it as she got out, and ripped some of the paper off. The passengers twisted their heads so as to look at the scene of industry in Southampton docks, at least, that part of it which was laid bare by the rent in the brown paper. Mr. Spriggs turned it round and packed it down again as best he could.

Suddenly the conductor said 'Addison Road.'

Mr. Spriggs looked up quickly : 'Have we passed Mountview Avenue ?' he asked.

'Last stop,' said the conductor, unconcerned.—'Any more fares, please !'

So Mr. Spriggs got out and headed back towards home. Ten minutes later he turned up the Avenue, the brown paper parcel held firmly under his arm.

As his house came into view, he saw, to his horror, Mrs. Spriggs leaning on the garden gate, talking to a friend. This was an unforeseen difficulty and Mr. Spriggs decided he must wait until she had gone in, for it would have been impossible to reach the house next door unobserved. So here another ten minutes of valuable time was lost before he finally reached his goal and knocked upon the door.

Now was the great moment, thought Mr. Spriggs ; how surprised they would be. They would never guess how he had found out it was the child's birthday. They would ask him and he would say 'Aha,' or he might even say, 'A little bird told me.' Mr. Spriggs loved that kind of surprise.

Presently the mother of the child opened the door. 'Mr. Spriggs !' she said. 'Come in,' and she led the way to the front room.

On the floor sat the child playing with some bricks and around him were the grown-ups. The father of the child, an old lady, and another girl.

'Auntie,' said the mother of the child to the old lady, 'this is Mr. Spriggs from next door ; and this,' turning to the other girl,

'is my cousin Flossie, Mr. Spriggs.' Flossie smirked and said 'Pleased to meet you!' Then there was rather an awkward silence, before Mr. Spriggs produced the parcel.

'I've—I've brought just a little something, a toy that I thought the kid might like.'

'How nice!' said the mother.

Mr. Spriggs felt things weren't going right so he began feverishly to unpack the parcel. The child meanwhile continued to pile brick upon brick in the construction of a monstrous tower.

At last the crane emerged triumphant from the welter of brown paper, string, and Southampton dock, and was placed proudly on the floor by the child's side. The child glanced at it, kicked it out of the way with his foot, and went on with the brick tower, whilst Flossie giggled and the aunt sat very straight in her chair and looked on.

Mr. Spriggs collected the crane and produced one of the sand-bags—then kneeling on the floor he set up the crane on its box and began to demonstrate its possibilities—but the child turned back to the brick tower. Mr. Spriggs produced another sand-bag and lifted it too from the ground to the level of the box. Here he unhooked it—it rolled—it fell to the floor and rolled farther. Mr. Spriggs turned quickly to pick it up—his foot caught the box—the box caught the bottom of the tower and a moment later there was a resounding crash and the floor was strewn with loose bricks. Sitting amongst the ruins was the child crying bitterly.

Perhaps, thought Mr. Spriggs, this was the moment for the crane, so he approached him again with it, but that only drew louder and more prolonged howls, and finally the mother came to his assistance and, picking up the child, carried him off to be comforted.

Mr. Spriggs felt dazed. He said he thought he had better be going, and still under the aunt's gaze of now undisguised hostility he made for the door.

As he walked down the garden path his thoughts were very bitter. With children he had been a failure, his whole evening had been a failure, his eight-and-sixpence worth had been a failure. His surprise had been a failure, for they had not even asked him how he knew it was the child's birthday. *He was a failure.*

He turned back up his own pathway and went into his house. He would have needed very little provocation to burst into tears.

Vaguely he remembered he had promised his wife to weed the

garden in the cool of the evening. He went into the back yard and found a little trowel and then came out to the front again and started work upon the herbaceous borders.

An hour later Mr. Spriggs had reached the corner where, beside a laurel bush, two deck-chairs stood. The evening was warm and his back was aching, so he sat down. Above the trees of the avenue swifts were chasing each other and every now and again screaming shrilly, a noise which jarred on his ear, almost as much as the memory of the afternoon jarred on his mind. A motor-bicycle roared past up the street and Mr. Spriggs made a little grimace of annoyance. Then he heard the front door of the next house open and a man's voice say something—and a moment later a woman's voice answer. Ordinarily Mr. Spriggs would never have eavesdropped, but to-night he felt at war with the world. He listened intently.

'Well, have you put him to bed?' said the man, who was evidently already sitting in the garden.

'Yes,' said the woman, who had just arrived, 'at last I have; he would go on playing with that lovely crane.'

'D'you mean the one old Spriggs brought?'

'Yes—he's only gone to bed now without a fuss on condition that he can have it on the chair beside his cot. He's winding the sand-bags on to it.'

'Jolly nice of old Spriggs to bring it, wasn't it?'

'Yes,' said the woman's voice, 'I wonder how on earth he knew it was Georgie's birthday.'

'I don't know. I must ask him in the morning. Well, have you got the supper ready?'

'Yes, dear, come along in.'

Mr. Spriggs felt that a peace treaty had been signed between himself and the world. So he got up and went indoors, for he wanted to tell somebody all about his afternoon. He found his wife in the kitchen and was going to tell her: but instead he said, 'Oh, hullo dear, can I help you with the supper?' for he remembered that Mrs. Spriggs was not interested in children.

'PASS, FRIEND: ALL'S WELL.'

BY ALFRED NOYES.

IT was a pregnant saying of a very wise man that the measure of our friends is the measure of the loss we feel on their departure. The gap that was made, a year ago, in the more intelligent social life of England by the death of Lady Burghclere is one that is not likely to be filled in a lifetime, if indeed it can ever be filled again. She belonged to an order which is yielding place (as many think) to a new; or (as others think) to confusion. In either event, it seems improbable that her particular qualities of mind and heart are likely to be seen again under the new conditions. In isolation we may find one or another of them; but we shall not find, in combination that fine sense of the great tradition of English statesmanship; that quick wit, and keen eye for character, as of a more graceful and dignified Madame de Sévigné; and that vital sense of history which gives permanent value to her *Life of Strafford*. The real and—as I think—insufficiently recognised value of her work in this field was the subject of a just and well-balanced tribute by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, the Warden of New College, at the time of her death.

'That she was in her own sphere not only an admirable scholar but an historian who brought to bear upon the interpretation of the past a fair, sagacious and substantial intelligence will be acknowledged by all who are acquainted with her work. There is no decorative artifice or striving after effect in Lady Burghclere's historical writing. Rather it is solid, serious, convincing, based on evidence which has been painfully won, seriously tested and by a strong and persevering effort taken into the mind; and consequently, although her books were never widely popular, they will remain indispensable long after the favourites of the season have passed into oblivion.'

It is high praise to say of any book among the modern cataracts that 'it will remain indispensable'; but when a scholar says it, the praise must not be confused or compared with the random exaggerations of the hour. 'Indispensable' is exactly true of at least one of her works—the *Life of Strafford*. This, in its new material, its accuracy and its insight, definitely supersedes all others.

Mr. Fisher went on to say that for her friends who were not historically minded

'it must have seemed difficult to relate Lady Burghclere to these extended and valuable contributions to historical learning. How, one might ask, could such erudition go with a figure so dainty, a temper so fastidious, a gift of speech so crisp, finished and witty, and with social talents so highly developed? Had she written light comedies or lyrics, one might more easily have imagined her an author. But, in fact, though her learning was lightly worn and never obtruded, she was a scholar to the finger-tips, modest as all true scholars should be, clear-headed, and with a tenacity of purpose which shrank from no drudgery.

This also is well and truly said, and though I could hardly imagine her as an author of light comedies or lyrics—her St. Augustine and Dante were companions too constant for that—her friends will understand exactly what Mr. Fisher meant. It might perhaps be more in character to say that one could easily imagine her as the author of a volume of letters which should be to our own time what the letters of Madame de Sévigné were to a former age; and I can very well imagine that, if these letters are ever published, as I am certain that in due time they ought to be, there will be qualities of observation, wit, insight into many diversities of character, and quick vivid sketches of many notable men and women which will not suffer by comparison with those of the earlier writer. Those that I have seen recall her conversation which, as Mr. Fisher says, had edge but no acerbity or malice. There was a keen edge in some of her descriptions of eminent men and women whom she met in her youth. Letters written from Knowsley show that she could look forward to a dance as eagerly as any *débutante* of to-day; though, when she was hardly out of her teens, she was also able to discover, at dinner with Mr. Gladstone, that she differed from him on certain aspects of the French Revolution, and that he was imperfectly acquainted with some of the best authorities on the subject.

Her opportunities for observation were exceptional. She was born on July 2, 1864, and was the eldest daughter of the fourth Earl of Carnarvon, who was twice Secretary of State for the Colonies and afterwards Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at a critical time. He not only made her his companion and guided her early explorations of literature, biography and history, but 'trained her to keep a secret,' employed her to copy 'documents of importance,' and had

complete confidence in her discretion. Her devotion to him is revealed in a single phrase of one of her letters. When she heard that he was on his way home from a visit to Canada she wrote, 'I feel like dancing a *pas seul*.' Feelings of this kind are not invariably aroused by those who try sedulously, as he did, to cultivate the minds and literary tastes of their children. Her devotion to him, and to his memory, was deep and lasting.

It is the influence of this atmosphere of high politics 'in which she grew up and remained all her life' that gives her biographical work its most vital quality. In several of her books there is a direct connection between her personal relationships and the events of which she writes; and this, even when the events belong to a remoter past, kindles her historic imagination and enables her to write with the insight of an almost personal friendship for her chief characters. Her beautiful little book on the Duke of Wellington, for instance, was the direct outcome of her early days at Knowsley, where she spent much time with the fifteenth Earl of Derby (twice Foreign Secretary) and his wife, who were both greatly attached to her. The nucleus of the book that she published so long afterwards on the Duke of Wellington was formed by the letters he wrote to Lady Derby, and its title, *A Great Man's Friendship*, is the key to its character. It is not a long book, but one reader at least can say that it gave him by far the most vivid picture he had encountered of the real human being behind the mask of the 'Iron Duke.' And it was not only vivid, it was as convincing as a letter from an intimate friend; as warm and living and firm as an actual handshake. The man lives and breathes in that little book; and he is seen there clothed with flesh and blood, as I really believe he is to be seen in no other history or biography whatsoever. This is largely because the author had lived (though at a distance in time) among the living memories of those for whom the 'great world-victor's victor' was not merely a historical figure but a personal friend. It was the same with her book on the Queen of Holland, who was another of Lady Derby's friends; and in a remoter sense it was the same with her book on Strafford. Her marriage in 1887 to the son of the second Earl of Strafford probably led her mind to long thoughts of one of the most moving and tragic episodes of English history, until once more she was able to write, this time on a larger scale, with the same sense of practical participation, or of writing from the inside that characterised the other books. It is true that she had access to a large collection of hitherto unpublished

material. But it was her singular power of quickening the material and making the man shine through it that gave the book its permanent value. There are few pages of any biographical or historical writing that have a more moving personal quality than those in which she describes the last hours of Strafford. His relations with his wife and children are as vividly realised as though they were all personally known to the author, and the reticence and complete absence of sentimentalism with which the story is told add immeasurably to the depth and poignance of the historic tragedy. The peculiar quality that I am trying to emphasise here is difficult to analyse. Very famous historians have possessed it in a far smaller measure. It may be said, therefore, that this quality of the work may be separable from its actual value as a piece of historical research on what may be called the political side. Of that we must leave the professional historians to judge. But of one thing I feel certain, that there are few truer or more vividly realised pages in any historical writing than those in which Strafford's preparation of his own mind (I can find no better phrase) to face the final parting from his wife and children is depicted in this biography. One can well imagine Froude or Macaulay offering to its author, in the field of history, something very like the tribute paid by Scott to Jane Austen in the field of fiction: 'The big bow-bow I can do myself like anyone going; but the exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me.'

They were not commonplace things or characters in this case; but it was nevertheless the way in which the little things that make us human were realised, the way in which the little things whereby we distinguish one friend from another were indicated, that gave the sense of life to Lady Burghclere's Strafford and, on a smaller scale, to her portrait of Wellington.

She had a genius for selecting just those letters and passages from documents which give essential character; and, at times, it has almost the effect of the withdrawing of a curtain, the opening of a window, so that we see the actual scene. She never obtrudes her own part in the work; but it is there all the same, and it is indispensable, providing all the explanations and connecting links, and illuminating the whole. She brings out with the utmost delicacy little gleams of unsuspected dramatic interest, pathos, and quiet humour. In 1850, for instance, the Duke of Wellington had an accident, and some correspondence in consequence with a

strange Miss J. which other historians might have regarded as insignificant. Lady Burghclere brings it all perfectly into her picture, and makes the reader smile with delight at the delicate humour with which the two letters are worked into the text. Miss J. writes sincerely hoping that

'such gracious interposition of Providence in your favour may eventually lead you to glorify Him in your life and conversation . . . I do not give you my address, My Lord Duke, in order to elicit an answer, but merely to imply that, should my Christian advice be required, you may know where to find me.'

The reply was laconic.

'Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington begs leave to acknowledge the receipt of Miss J.'s note of the 16th inst. He is thankful that he received no injury by the overturn of his carriage a week ago. He returns his thanks to Miss J. for noticing the accident!'

None of Lady Burghclere's friends will fail to recognise, I think, in the mere selection and juxtaposition of these two letters the delightful note of her own humour in conversation; and this is characteristic of all her books. She made great use of letters and documents, but her own act in selection gave to the finished work the sense of life which makes all the difference between history and mere book-making.

If I wanted mere information on the apparently more important detailed facts, I might consult some bulkier work of reference; but if I really wished for a glimpse of the men themselves, as they were in real life, as they would appear to a personal acquaintance, I should turn, and advise others to turn, to those two books of Lady Burghclere—*Strafford* and *A Great Man's Friendship*. There is all the difference between hearing a man on a political platform, or seeing him in his public capacity, and meeting him in his library, or while he is telling tales to his children in a quiet garden.

This does not in the least mean that there is any concession to the recent theory that fiction must pretend to be history and history adopt the methods of fiction. The details of these portraits are, as a rule, far more certain, far more carefully 'documented' than most of the apparently more important psychological adventures of the 'big bow-bow' historians. One never has a doubt in reading Lady Burghclere's biographies as to her facts or her characterisation. The truth of the writing, its dignity and nobility of feeling—particularly in the *Strafford*—are the direct

outcome of that deep, personal interest in her subjects which I have described as the peculiar quality of her work. It deserves closer study in this age of hasty search for superficial effect and disregard for historical truth. For it was just this sense of personal intimacy that seemed to make it a point of honour with her to be scrupulously careful to set down the exact truth so far as she could discover it. She was not writing about figures in 'history.' She was writing about men and women who, but for the accidents of time, would have been her friends, and she could no more colour the facts for 'artistic' purposes than she could have done it in a privately printed memoir of a member of her own immediate family. The result, of course, was far more truly artistic than if she had followed the popular method. The Spirit that unfolds itself in history may very well be trusted to shape something better than the ingenuity of any historian can 'rough-hew' for himself.

Her devotion to truth in history and biography was as personal a matter as the devotion of the great proconsuls, her political heroes, to the service of their country; devotion expressed with perfect simplicity and truth by one of their most lovable representatives—the ambassador who was content to carry out his task and sought no other reward:

'I vow to thee, my country, all earthly gifts above
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love.'

In her second marriage in 1890 to Mr. Herbert Gardner (who was created Lord Burghclere in 1895, on the recommendation of Lord Rosebery), Lady Burghclere had thirty years of happiness and companionship in the things she loved best. Lord Burghclere's translation of the Georgics is perhaps the most memorable of his own literary work, and it contains passages of striking beauty. His death in 1921 was a blow from which she never really recovered.

During the War she threw herself into the work for British prisoners abroad, and her Prisoners' Fund soon became known throughout the Fatherland. The spirit of its work was her own, and it can best be indicated, both in its methods and its results, by one brief incident. A German prisoner whom she had been able to help, on this side, wrote to her from Germany, after his exchange, expressing his gratitude and asking if there was anything he could do in return. Lady Burghclere replied that if he ever had the opportunity she hoped he would do something, perhaps, to help some English prisoners in Germany. Not long afterwards she received

a very brief letter telling her simply that her correspondent had succeeded in getting a post in a German prison-camp. It was an illustration, in its own way, of her great gift for drawing together the most various minds; a gift only possible to a mind capable of seeing many points of view, and covering a wide range of intellectual interests. Her own views, nevertheless, were clear cut and definite; and, though few of her friends can have heard her make an unkind criticism, many of them must have heard her quietly suggest a distinction between truth and its opposite which brought a new clarity into the air. I remember once hearing a discussion of a literary question in which a certain elderly friend was supposed to have shown some lack of the cool modern tolerance for a book which it was nevertheless agreed was base and vicious. Lady Burghclere listened for some time to various amusing descriptions of her elderly friend's absurd indignation and useless narrow-mindedness; then, with the most delightful smile, and almost as though she too were amused at the ease with which she could settle the whole matter, she asked 'Would it be simpler to describe him as a Christian gentleman?'

Her intellectual interests were not only wide but based on abiding principles. The sacraments of her Church meant much to her. She read her Dante, not casually but constantly, and she must have been one of the very few women in England who read the Vulgate, and took it to Church with her, for the pleasure of following the lessons in Latin. She knew Butler's *Analogy*, as scholars of a bygone generation knew it, and her own anthology of devotional literature (at present unpublished) reveals a spiritual aspect of her character which—though it gives depth and tone to some pages of her *Strafford*—was usually hidden from the world around her by her own sensitive reticence.

Only occasionally does it openly break into expression; and, when it does, it reveals the unexpected strength and beauty of a deeply contemplative spirit. An instance of this is the brief passage on the death of Wellington—

'The last note, written apparently in perfect health, is dated September 13 and the end came on September 14, 1852. It was a shattering blow to Lady Salisbury, and with her whole heart she must have echoed the Prophet's cry: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"'

Only the extraordinary personal realisation of character which

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I have been describing could have dictated that passage, and it is followed by another glimpse of the spirit in which she herself lived and wrote.

'If the friend was lost to sight and hearing, the influence of his spirit survived to rule her whole life. As Penn has beautifully said, in his *Fruits of Solitude*, "Death cannot kill what *never* dies. Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle, the Root and Record of their friendship." So it was with these friends. For in the course of their intimacy she had absorbed a measure of that noble devotion to "Service" which was the keynote of Wellington's actions, while the unfolding of his vast store of political and cosmopolitan knowledge and experience had quickened into response her native intelligence.'

In this passage we have an admirable illustration in little of the fine saying of Plotinus. 'Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike.' It applies not only to the friend of Wellington, but to her herself.

There was indeed a vein of mysticism, in the finest and most spiritual sense of the word, running through her mind and her work. It approves and gives unexpected significance to the last pages of *A Great Man's Friendship*, though only in the most delicate and quiet touches, as when a light steals through a high window and quietly brings out the colours and hidden meanings in a picture on the opposite wall.

She finds a conversational letter, written on September 12, 1852, from Wellington and Lady Salisbury in which he encloses for her amusement a specimen of the strange messages he received from unknown correspondents.

'I had one this morning from a madman who announces that he is a messenger from the Lord, and will deliver his message to-morrow morning, Monday, at Walmer Castle! We shall see!'

One more letter Lady Salisbury received, on the 13th, and this was the last. Lady Burghclere continues:

'she could scarcely have broken the seal before the writer had passed beyond human ken. For the "messenger from the Lord" delivered the summons to this great servant on the morning of the 14th of September. The messenger, was however, no madman but, as his nearest friends would have admitted, that "*Sora nostra morta corporale*" for whose gentle advent others besides the Saint of Assisi must praise the "*Bon Signore*." Death came, indeed, in

tender guise to the good old man. He looked as if he was having a little sleep in his chair. He was playing with his grandchildren the evening before.'

These passages indicate Lady Burghclere's settled convictions; but she was not untouched, at times, by the nobler kind of uncertainty as to the future. 'It may be enough,' I once heard her say, 'just to have been allowed to see, here, for a moment.'

The remark could only have been made by one who, even here, had glimpses of the abiding vision. This contemplative note, however, was of the horizon, not of the world in which she lived; and she never made the mistake of trying to feed the mind upon abstractions. There were blue hills in the distance, and snow-capped peaks; and, if she could write of real men and women under her 'incense tree' at Rapallo, she was content. One thing, however, should be told. On a certain occasion, when a younger woman was seriously ill and the doctors were contemplating a blood-transfusion, she quite simply suggested that she was ready to 'give some of hers.' In her own fragility it would have been impossible, of course, but she did not know it, and her offer was made from a very great heart.

If the tradition which she represented is to pass altogether, there are obviously values in it which we can ill spare in these confused days. It rests with the younger generation whether those values are to perish also. Wide reading and vital interest in all those thoughts and affairs which make up the real life of the more highly-organised types of humanity; a concern, deep and sincere, even to anxiety, not only for the welfare but for the clear conscience of her country; a courtesy of the great tradition, un-failing because its every act and thought were dictated by an instant perception of the point of view of others, and a real consideration for them. If these things are old-fashioned, they are also, like old-fashioned flowers, fragrant in the memory; and it will be an ill day when we are forced to say we know not where to find them again.

For her they were not merely the tradition of an order or an age. They were neither 'manners' nor 'manner.' They constituted the very fabric of her mind and spirit; and it is because they were so essentially a part of her that her biographical work possesses those rarest and most valuable of qualities—a scrupulous regard for truth, and a *reliability* which, in an age like this, would in itself give grace and dignity to her works and to her memory.

RHODESIAN JOTTINGS.

BY RAWDON HOARE.

THE homestead I have in mind when writing of Southern Rhodesia stands on an escarpment overlooking the Mazoe hills. As I write, the black clouds are gathering in the East and the distant roll of thunder echoes across the valley. The atmosphere is tense—the veld silent, for even the birds seem to scent the approach of a storm. After seven months' drought the rains are breaking over the country and again the garden and veld will awaken from their long sleepy rest under the scorching sun. The storm rumbles closer and a faint puff of wind rustles the curtain by my side—again all becomes still. The hills are no longer visible, as a thick veil of water gradually envelops the landscape—rushing with hissing fury to embrace the homestead in its angry arms. From the South, the wind freshens as if to defend its territory from the oncoming storm, but suddenly it surrenders and dies down—then, springing up again with cyclonic force in the North, it sweeps the blackening mass in its wild onslaught towards the farm. Flashes of lightning pierce the surrounding kopjes, while deafening roars of thunder crash overhead—the rain pours down in torrents, forming an impregnable swirling barrier round the house; the wind dies away, its work done, leaving the homestead and surrounding country to the deluge of tropical rain. Outside, the gravel becomes a racing waterway, and the dried-up lawn a pool; but one can feel that every tree and blade of grass are opening wide their parched mouths to quench the thirst of many months. For hours the rain continues, while the thunder rolls away, until only a distant grumble can be heard, and then the sun shines again and all is peace.

The house is whitewashed, with a thatched roof surrounded by a garden of many coloured flowers—petunias, nasturtiums, stocks and antirrhiniums grow together in luxuriant profusion, while jasmine and morning glory throw their brilliant reflections in a pond of crimson water-lilies. Beds of roses are scattered here and there—and such roses! There is something in the Rhodesian soil which they love, for the size and length of stem compare with the best in England—it is only the lack of scent which shows that they grow on a

tropical soil. But the best of all are the hollyhocks which have taken charge; tall, short, single and double, grow all the year round in the beds and on the paths—anywhere—but they insist on growing where they will. If transplanted, they just die, out of pure annoyance at having been disturbed. Gladioli and freesias also thrive in large masses, being some of the first to flower after the rains.

Humming-birds flitter from flower to flower, while, overhead, white pigeons show in dazzling contrast to the blue sky. The garden is alive with birds of a thousand hues and small lizards play hide and seek among the rockery stones.

Oranges, lemons, plums, apples, mangoes and avareardo pears grow in an orchard at the back of the house, in the middle of which runs a path to the kitchen garden, bordered on either side by green tubs filled with red carnations that flower almost the whole year round.

The beginning of the rains is the signal for every farmer to start planting his crops, for the majority have only about six weeks to finish the task. April and May see the ploughs at work and the cries of native boys driving their spans of sixteen oxen over the veld until November, when the planting begins. Disc ploughs are generally used, moleboards being too slow and extravagant for general use. When the first heavy rains have fallen, the disc and drag harrows are ordered out; for the maize lands, the harrows are closely followed by the planters; for the tobacco, by ridgers, so as to make a natural drainage for the plants.

Seed-beds for the tobacco are prepared in September and sown in relays at intervals, which vary according to the number of acres to be grown. These beds have to be hand-watered, so are usually located near a running stream and carefully protected from the winds by grass screens. As soon as each bed is sown, a layer of long veld grass is placed on the top to be replaced by white muslin in two weeks' time, when germination begins. Six weeks from the date of sowing, the seedlings are ready, and when the ridging has been finished, they are planted out by hand at spaces of about three feet. In fourteen days, they receive their first hand-cultivation and any seedlings which have died or been eaten by pests are filled in. Priming—the taking off of the bottom leaves—and cultivation at various intervals follow for about six weeks, until the plants are ready to be topped—the snapping off of the flowers so that the goodness and strength of the growth are absorbed in the leaf. The

small suckers are then removed—probably three or four times—and the plant left to ripen, which begins with the bottom leaves.

These months of waiting are months of intense anxiety for tobacco growers—so many things can happen to ruin their crops. Disease is the most fatal, and, no matter how many precautions are taken, may easily cause a great deal of damage to the leaf. Angular spot—a small brown spot which appears on the leaf—surrounded by a yellow halo—is one of the most common, but wild fire—a similar kind of spot—is much more serious and can easily wipe out the entire crop within a few days, but this disease is fortunately not so common. There are many others too numerous to mention here, but the tobacco-growers' vigil lasts from when the first seed-bed is sown in September until the last barn is cured in May.

The bottom leaves usually ripen about two weeks after the plant has been topped—the leaf becoming a pale yellow which gradually obliterates the vivid green. Native labour reaps the leaves and packs them into wooden crates lined with sacking, which are transported by wagons or lorries to the curing barns, where the leaves are taken out and tied on to sticks, in bunches of three. The sticks are then hung in tiers in the barns which are heated with large iron pipes by outside furnaces, burning either wood or coal. The thermometers are kept at various temperatures ranging from 90°–160° for about five days and nights, when the leaf will have been killed by the gradual process of heat, and if the curing has been successful, will have turned a pure yellow colour—if a bright leaf—and a deep mahogany—if a dark. During the process of curing, a certain amount of moisture has to be kept in barns to ensure that the process of killing the leaf is gradual; should moisture be allowed to settle, or the barns not ventilated at the proper time, a thin film will form on the leaf which causes discoloration (sponging) and greatly reduces its value.

When the curing is finished, the barns are allowed to cool down and the leaf untied from the sticks and either bulked or baled to await a convenient time for grading. But there are many pitfalls and a barn of perfect leaf can easily be ruined within a few minutes, should the thermometers not be kept absolutely steady. This necessitates supervision both day and night, for the average native cannot be trusted for long intervals at a time.

With maize, both the planting and reaping are easier. The fields must be kept free from weeds, but the planting and culti-

vating are done by machines drawn by oxen. After the rains, the mealie cobbbs begin to dry off and, usually about June, the reaping starts. Each native is issued with seven sacks, which have to be filled in one day. In the evening, the sacks are transported by wagon to the main dump and emptied on to one enormous pile of a cone-like shape, which often reaches as high as thirty or forty feet. When the reaping is finished, the steam-sheller arrives and soon the pile of cobbbs is shelled into sacks each weighing 205 lb. which are hauled by either wagon or motor-lorry to the nearest railway siding.

Farmers have to spend a busy day and by sunrise each morning the farms are well astir. Just before the sun steals over the valley, the *simbre* or bell warns the natives of the beginning of another day. A curious collection struggle out from the pole and mud huts, some wrapped in blankets, some in coats, but all shivering with the cold—even in the hottest weather. In the winter, their black skins turn a kind of ashen grey and, until the sun warms the frosty air, they are quite incapable of any hard work, but crouch over small fires which they feed with mealie cobbbs, dried grass or anything at hand. They seldom eat until midday when there is an hour and a half's rest. On many occasions when natives are given definite contract work—a certain amount of work to complete in a day—they will not return to the compound for food until round three o'clock in the afternoon. Their powers of endurance on empty insides are remarkable.

Many of the natives are excellent workers—quite capable of loyal and devoted service, but their ideas of loyalty are different from ours! and the farmer has to supervise continually his labour, if he wishes to obtain any results. The best of boys, if left long alone, will become indolent. But to get good results, labour must be fairly treated. Natives appreciate fairness and, like animals, are quick to pick out a white man who is antagonistic to the black race. A good clout over the head frequently has excellent results for a misdemeanour, providing it is not done too often, but thrashing in the proper sense of the word is a mistake and only ends in the lowering of the white man's prestige.

Labour is recruited from various parts of Africa—the indigenous natives from the Southern Rhodesian reserves—the non-indigenous, from Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa, with a few scattered Zulus here and there. Those imported from outside Southern Rhodesia seldom bring their wives. During the dry weather, they trek down in parties of eight or nine, who all

come from the same village. The women, as a general rule, are extremely faithful, but should the whispering of an *affaire* pass through the compound, a scandal ensues, and before long the employer will find a number of natives waiting outside his house, all with a great deal to say. •

Natives are not unlike children, and, if good results are to be gained, they must be treated as such. Once they realise that their master is fair and has the interests of their welfare at heart—they will put up with a great deal and as the years go by, return again and again to work on the same farm. But the strictest discipline must be enforced, for, once a native is allowed a little scope, he will take advantage of the concession. Rhodesia is lucky in its labour and many people in other parts of the world envy the Rhodesian farmer his lot.

At sunset, the day ends and the quiet of the veld is broken by singing and chattering natives, wending their way to the compound in gay anticipation of their evening meal. The compound shows a pleasant sight—natives squatting round the doors of their huts, talking and laughing over the most trivial affairs—they are the most awful gossips—while their women inside are cooking the food. But on Saturday evening is when the revels go far into the night, causing many a boy to wake up in the morning with a thick head!

Kafir beer—a mixture made out of *ripoko* seed and somewhat resembling porridge—is the staple alcoholic drink and, providing the employer controls the amount to be brewed with care—all will be well, and the evening end with the beating of tom-toms and a picturesque dance—but, as soon as the drinking gets out of hand, then serious fighting starts and a murder may quite easily bring the revels to an unpleasant end. From a distance, it is attractive to listen to the tom-toms and the pleasant drone of the natives singing as the sounds roll across the moonlit veld.

The rainy season is not without excitement, and sandy riverbeds, dry for so many months during the year, become rushing torrents of water within a few hours. Those living on the opposite side of rivers from the railways, or main roads, experience difficult and sometimes dangerous periods when crossing their drifts. It is not uncommon for a motor-car to get stuck in the middle of a crossing and for the occupants—having waded safely to the bank—to watch the river rise within a few minutes and swamp their car. Every year the rivers of Rhodesia take their toll of human life.

Good rough shooting can be had on practically every farm—

guinea-fowl, Rhodesian pheasants and partridges abound, and in the evenings, a walk round the coverts of gum-trees will nearly always result in something for the pot. Snipe, quail and duck are also to be shot on the marshes and in the *vleis*. Reed buck and duiker roam almost everywhere, but the larger buck, such as Kudu and Sable, are more rare, and special shooting trips must be arranged for their heads.

The delights of camping in either May or June are difficult to equal. Sunny days and brilliant skies with nights of moonlight and a thousand stars, the air tinged with the winter frost make one feel the magic of Africa such as Cecil Rhodes must have felt in his determined march towards the North. During the day the work is hard and often unrewarded, though the sport is good. Many miles are covered over the veld with only a gun-bearer as a companion, for the spoor of game is not easy to follow. Let me give an account of a camping trip in which I took part on the Lower Mazoe River some three hundred miles from Salisbury. We were not out to bag elephant or lion—just to enjoy ourselves—shoot for the pot and native settlers around who had suffered from a severe drought the year before and were short of food—and fish in a river with attractive pools where quantities of tiger fish lived.

We left Salisbury in the early morning in heavily laden motor-cars and a small lorry to carry the stores. The drive was attractive along the main road to the Zambesi, where farther on it runs through a part of Portuguese East Africa and then to Nyasaland. But we were to branch off at Mrewa, one of the out-stations of the native department and police. To begin with, the road runs through areas of intense cultivation, maize and irrigated crops growing on either side, while attractive-looking homesteads nestle in the kopjes a short distant from the road. The view is wonderful and glimpses of purple hills can be seen above those surrounding the valley. The soils are red and in the *vleis* black—both excellent for maize cultivation. For sixty miles or so, the valley continues, then a climb is made into the native reserves. No longer is the soil so fertile, but is replaced by sandy loam and the scenery by scrubby bush. Here and there are scattered native villages, the huts looking like toadstools dotted about. But round each village is built a stiff barricade to prevent lions and other disagreeable visitors from breaking in.

Some magnificent rivers are crossed and a rest for lunch under the shady trees along their banks is pleasant after driving over the

bumpy roads, for avoiding boulders and pot-holes is a strain to those used to driving on English roads. Mrewa, a distant outpost, was reached about three o'clock. An attractive little station—the Native Commissioner's house—his offices—a police camp and in the middle an enormous pole flying the Union Jack; far indeed from civilisation, two hundred miles from the nearest railway. We received a hearty welcome from all, and after filling up with petrol we again set out on our way.

Off the main road we now turned on our way to the river, passing the same stunted, dried-up scrub and high granite boulders and kopjes, never being able to travel faster than about thirty-five miles an hour. Not far from our night destination, the local cattle inspector and his assistant passed us in a car. We stopped a few minutes to exchange the time of day and he told us that some lions had been creating a certain amount of trouble in the district, so we had better be careful when we camped out. Great excitement! for I had never met a lion, and in spite of the many exciting stories which have been written—one might almost say continuously written—there is still a haze of mystery surrounding the king of beasts.

The camp site reached, the boys started to unpack and soon a large camp-fire was burning, with canvas chairs arranged round its sides. It was the hour of sundown—that well-known time in Africa when the whisky bottle and other good things are produced. Somebody found a gramophone and some old records such as the 'Bing Boys' and 'Show Boat' which were played. A tinge of frost already nipped the air and we felt glad of our thick coats and rugs. The moon was rising above the kopjes, flooding the veld in light. Not far off, the chatter of the boys could be heard preparing our food. This was soon ready—hot tomato soup out of tins—buck stewed in Cape Madeira, plenty of potatoes and toasted cheese made really hot and then two glasses of port. For a while we sat round the fire singing and then to bed. The boys had cut huge heaps of veld grass on which our valises were laid and under plenty of blankets, I was soon half-asleep, soothed by the sight of the glowing fire which was to be kept burning all night and listening to the calls of animal life—an occasional roar of a lion might be heard, but only very far away.

In the morning, I was surprised to see that another small camp had sprung up a short distance away. On enquiring I found that it belonged to our friend, the cattle inspector, who had started his

night's sleep by a drift about eight miles distant. But some lions had become so troublesome and inquisitive that they thought it wise to move on and had arrived under the protection of our larger camp in the middle of the night. It had been impossible to keep a fire burning when he had only one native to assist.

After an excellent breakfast in the crisp morning air with the sun gradually increasing in warmth, we started again on our journey. Nothing of particular interest occurred and by five o'clock in the afternoon, we were settled in our permanent camp which was to be a home for three days. Situated about one hundred feet above the banks of the Lower Mazoe the cluster of pole and mud huts looked picturesque. Here and there stood shady trees which protected the camp from the scorching early afternoon sun. Soon a number of natives from adjoining reserves came in to seek temporary employment; a few being taken on by the native messengers who accompanied our party. They looked thin and underfed, but proved excellent workers and thoroughly enjoyed having us in the camp, particularly when they found we had no intention of collecting taxes. That night proved uneventful, though at times, sleeping in the open under my mosquito net, I rather wondered about lions, whose spoor had been seen near the camp earlier in the day.

In camp we were kept under strict discipline by a very charming lady, whose reminiscences of the Mashona rebellion would fill with ease a most interesting book. At sunrise, after a cup of tea and some biscuits, we set out with our rifles to see what we could shoot. One of our party—a great friend—I always suspected of secreting a novel beneath his ample shirt and of reading it under the shade of some pleasant tree. I feel certain that from time to time he would close his book, let off his rifle and so bask in the sunshine of approval on his return to camp. But he was never caught and our hostess is to this day oblivious to such gross deceit.

The party having shot three Kudu and a Sable for the natives, the inhabitants of a village came one evening to dance, and round the large camp-fire some two hundred men and women, accompanied by the beating of tom-toms and singing, performed some curious antics—not unlike those seen in a modern ball-room, but more picturesque and certainly more natural! The women danced alone, which was the principal difference.

Some of the solo dances by the men were really wonderful—like a ballet, for they each represented some phase of life. One I remember in particular represented a hunt. The native danced in

the circle of the fire with spear raised aloft, making sudden darts and calls at an imagined prey; he finished by darting away into the moonlight and became hidden in the bush. It was all most picturesque, but continued far too long, it being close on three o'clock in the morning before the revellers returned to their huts.

My morning shave—always rather a lengthy affair—proved of a great interest to the native women and children and often a group of seven or eight would arrive to watch the event. But, when they also followed me to my daily bath in the river, I had to be firm and instruct a native messenger to send them away.

And so three days passed very pleasantly. Nothing of excitement happened on the return journey, except one of the cars hit a rock and broke the petrol-tank. But by rather an ingenious method the situation was saved. The doctor's stethoscope was borrowed and with the help of a large glass bottle, the petrol was drawn into the vacuum tank, but the car had to be stopped every few miles in order to fill the bottle up. However, it arrived back in Salisbury the same time as we.

On another occasion, I was invited to spend a few days at the Governor's shooting camp near Fort Victoria where a 'Native Indaba' was to be held. This camp proved far more luxurious, with tents, baths and a high palisade to protect us from the wind. From many miles round, the chiefs and their attendants trekked in to pay their respects and voice any grievances to the representatives of the King. In the early morning, the natives arrived, dressed in all kinds of clothes, but each of the chiefs wore the chain of office hanging round his neck. Over two thousand natives were soon squatting on the ground in front of a cluster of large trees under which the Governor and his party were to sit. We took our seats, then rose as His Excellency in full uniform approached; the natives remained sitting, but clapped their hands in slow rhythm for about three minutes as a royal salute. A speech was made, delivered by the Governor and then translated by an interpreter for the natives to understand. The various chiefs came forward to make any requests or complaints that they might wish. It proved a tedious business and it was a good four hours before we returned to camp. But I felt impressed at that holding of a court on the lonely African veld and wished that His Majesty the King could have seen his many loyal subjects on that day.

That night meat and Kaffir beer were provided for all those who had taken part in the 'Indaba.'

In the evening we motored to Zimbabwe ruins, only ten miles away. By night they are an inspiring sight. The temple, bathed in the soft light of the moon changes to a realer aspect, and as one stands under the African sky surrounded by the silence of the veld, it is easy to visualise the spirits of the past and reconstruct again the human sacrifices that may have been offered on the large centre stone, and to hear the chant of the priests as they slowly wended their way in procession from between the enormous double walls, The Acropolis, silhouetted against the sky and towering up as if to guard some secret of the past, is a sight not to be forgotten. Zimbabwe, at night, seems full of ghosts and, in spite of Miss Caton Thompson and other eminent archæologists, one likes to believe in the old theory of the ruins having been the largest of a string of forts which protected the road for the Queen of Sheba's gold.

As I turn the last page of my notebook, my thoughts return again to the magic of the veld—the silence, the peace, those gifts of Africa, the memories of which are carried to other lands and other places, but will always be as a magnet for ever pulling towards Rhodesia.

ATOMS.

A MILLION years ago, from yon far point in space,
The starlight sped forth on its eager race
To reach and kiss your aureole of hair,
To gleam an instant and to vanish there.

How many ages ere that star first took its form
Rough-moulded in some vast etheric storm,
A myriad protons, dancing on their way,
Were fore-ordained to shape us—for a day!

We come, we meet, we touch, in time's infinity,
With scarcely pause to ask how may it be
That Fate again may sever us, dear heart,
And scatter us infinitely apart.

If, down the dead, black darkness of the cosmic night,
Our atoms in their endless, whirling flight
Shall plunge to life anew, will they forget
That shining moment when we lived and met?

J. M. CAIR.

HE WENT ACROSS SINGING.

BY J. R. H. HUTCHISON.

He lay very still on the bed. There was scarcely an undulation in the clothes to tell that a figure was there. His silver hairs wandered across the pillow like gulls flying away from a wreck. A clear-cut profile, sharper, more incisive than ever, showed pallid against the half-darkened wall.

The skin across his arched nose seemed tightly stretched : white, too, like his forehead, his hair, his hands, the sheets. His eyes were fixedly open, and he stared ahead of him, over the bowed head of the nurse, at the wall opposite.

The nurse stitched, stitched interminably. Rhythmically her arm moved under her inclined head. The needle went on weaving its pattern. He watched the arm rise and fall, clear in the circle of light which was shaded away from him and directed over her shoulder on to her work.

Sometimes he wanted to stop her stitching, as though he would be arresting the march of inexorable events. If only his heart would work as smoothly, as dependably, as reliably ! Then he would not be there.

He moved his pallid hands on the counterpane on which they rested. They had assumed a fragility and breeding they had never had in health, more delicate now and sensitive, but too feeble to move except faintly.

David must arrive home soon. It was more desperate to be alone now than ever it had been since Mary died. But David was hurrying home.

All the way from India David was coming. His mind floated off to a storm-tossed ship, little and old-fashioned, a ship of his own day, steam helped by sail ; plunging its bluff bows into the deep furrows, rising again to scale another dark, surge-crested wave which thundered in baffled and broken fury across the bows and over half the decks ; up and down, rising and falling like the nurse's arm. On the deck he saw David alone, immobile, face set to the bows and the breakers. There he stood unmoving while the waters, caught on the vessel's deck, splashed round his feet ankle high.

Hurry, David, hurry. It was dreadful to be so alone.

The nurse, hearing a whisper, rose and came over.

'Was he all right?' she asked, and bent low to catch a reply.

He nodded.

'Was he all right?' she repeated, seeing nothing, looking closely.

Had she not seen him nod? He would nod again. Too tired to speak. He would nod again, nod clearly, pronouncedly. Some nurses had no eyes in their heads.

The nurse, seeing a slight forward tilt, patted the pillows round his head and went back to her work.

His eyes strayed as they had so often done these last three weeks to the trees patterned on the wallpaper. Regularly his mind had taken refuge and wandered there, a poor substitute for the garden and woods he had loved: threaded its fevered, fantastic way among a ferny undergrowth of its own fashioning.

He was coming to know his way through the woods quite well. Round that next corner grew the clump of silver birches, then, a little farther on, that grand old oak.

But to-day he would go differently, turn round the birches the other way, exploring down the slope. Ah, there was a line of trees, a double line. Surely there must be a stream running there from the crooked, confidential way some of the trees leaned over to one another.

Now he caught a glimpse of the water which sent fitful, brilliant reflections into the sunshine.

Water, running, babbling water, always so lovable, so irresponsible, so cool, so refreshingly gay. He must go down to it. He must drink it.

Arrived at the edge he stooped down and raised it in cupped hands to his dry lips. Then he sat down among the rushes, which, like dressing dandies, stooped over to see that their tufted necktie was rightly tied.

It was lovely here. He must remember his way back.

But surely he had been here before, after all? That slow rise on the other side to the cottage on the skyline. Very like another stream.

He got up and wandered along the bank. Very like, delightfully, surprisingly like the stream he and . . .

It was it—the very place he had helped Mary across that day he had asked for her hand. Why, here were the same stepping-

stones—the very selfsame stepping-stones where, with so gentle a hand, he had helped her across, with so riotously exultant a heart. How delightful, how wonderful to find it again !

He stood and screened his eyes from the sun, looking over to the cottage round which wound the path they had taken that day as they came down.

But what was that figure descending the hill ? Surely he knew that walk. Yes, and that dress, bustled and frilled and tucked : and the sunshade over her shoulder. His heart leaped. It was her—it was Mary, his Mary, come back. He stood on the bank and waved.

She came down steadily towards him. Now she was near enough for him to see the beloved features. Not a change from that day : the same big, brown eyes, the same pink cheeks which the sun and his words had flushed so that a rose would raise its head in envy as she passed. Returned to him at last after being so long away.

She stood on the far bank and smiled. Then he remembered the song he had sung to her.

‘For the heart that has truly loved
Never forgets,
But as truly loves on till its close.’

He would sing it again to her. There, like that, then she would cross to him. Ah, she was coming, stepping so gracefully, the same pretty, loving Mary.

As she came towards him she stretched out her hand. He reached for it, touched lightly the fingers, then closed round them, so warm, his Mary’s. So she, smiling still to him, led him on to the stones and across the stream.

The nurse bent down to hear the whispered words, faint, so faint, so husky.

‘As truly loves on till its close.’

A thin hand, very white and fragile, raised itself from the sheets to her and she took it. The feeble fingers closed round hers with a firmness which surprised her. Then gradually they loosened, and the hand dropped inert back to its place on the sheets ; a smile played round the lips.

She folded the hands across his breast, gently closed the eyelids, and stole from the room.

THE DICTATOR.

I

OVER the castle, pinnaced, he saw
 The nation's standard proud upon the breeze ;
 He watched the people murmurous as bees
 At clover-time collecting in the square :
 Sharply he breathed, the steepness of the stair
 Had taxed his lungs by Rhadamanthine law
 That orders change in all things everywhere.

II

Upward he gazed, and down : the standard his,
 New emblem of his individual power ;
 The people his, and his the ripened hour,
 None wrestling, as the standard, to be free,
 All yielded, wax-like, to his will's decree :
 His strife of years a stairway was to this—
 So stayed he a moment in Eternity.

III

A moment—and his eyes were veiled in thought ;
 No more a leader but a soul apart,
 A mist of memory enswathed his heart :
 He heard no more the standard's vibrant strain,
 The expectant crowds pressed murmuring in vain,
 The clamorous stairway of his years was nought,
 And he was rendered to himself again.

IV

Oak-woods at morning swept across his view,
 The world all fresh and he unknown, untried
 Yet fleet as the wild deer, and at his side
 A girl—long dead—with radiant eyes and hair
 Like sunshine's wealth of spirit wandered there,
 And for their playmates all the dreams they knew
 That ever Youth wove on the jocund air.

V

Came anxious then a minion from below
 From senators assembled, pranked, elate
 In their brief hour of panoply of state,
 And by the footfall was his vision rent:
 Slowly he murmured as a prisoner pent,
 'Time's mirror truly: it is time to go,'
 And, sighing, downward to the cheers he went.

GORELL.

TO JUPITER.

OFFER no more your radiant light;
 Earth has her starry wonders too
 That glimmer on the cloudiest night
 When there is not a sign of you.
 In youth I loved you—as youth can.
 But you have lost the loving man.

While walking out the dusk on ways
 That lovers use on Summer eves,
 Behind the trees I saw your rays
 And you deep down among the leaves,
 And in delight I said to her:
 'Look at amazing Jupiter.'

She looked and sparkled as she stood
 Regarding you, and then she said:
 'He is the spirit of the wood,'
 And laughed, and, as she turned her head,
 I saw that you and all the skies
 Were but reflections of her eyes.

JOHN GIBBINS.

A RARE AMERICAN VISITOR.

BY JOHN M. MCBRYDE.

ONE morning about the middle of September as I looked out of my bedroom window in the heart of New Orleans, I discovered a solitary dark-brown bird perched on the limb of a hackberry-tree, which almost touched the house. Observing the stiff bristles fringing the bill and a thin white band about the throat I at once recognised him as a male chuck-will's-widow. Though I have heard its weird insistent call near Biloxi on the Mississippi bayous and though as a boy in Columbia, South Carolina, I shot one to add to my collection of skins, I was not prepared to see this shy bird of the woods so close to a dwelling in the midst of the crowded city, and I was especially surprised to find one roosting twenty feet from the ground on the limb of a tree with few protecting leaves. All day long he sat, silent, solitary, still, with eyes half-closed and head drawn in, but not tucked in proper bird fashion beneath the wing, his tiny beak pointing upward at an angle.

The next afternoon, seeing him there again and wishing to have some fun at his expense, I made the distress call of the birds, and in a moment several belligerent mocking-birds, always ready for a scrap, appeared, and taking him in his suit of brown for an owl, flew at him, scolding him with harsh, insulting cries. But he only sat and blinked at them, occasionally opening his eyes a bit wider and moving his head slightly as if in a dream. At last when, growing bolder, they flew down close to him on each side, he opened his great mouth from ear to ear as if he were going to turn himself inside out or swallow them whole, thrust at them with his beak, and gave a low hiss like a snake. Then he relapsed into his former attitude of complete indifference towards them and the world about him. As twilight came, tired by his passive resistance, they left him and flew off to seek a roosting-place for the night.

Thus left alone, in a few minutes he stretched out first one wing and then the other to make sure they were limber after his twelve hours' sleep, and just as dark came, flew silently from his perch to gather his nightly harvest of insects. I was not able to watch him in his flight and to compare it with the skilful gyrations

of his cousin the bullbat (nighthawk). Audubon's account of it, however, is both accurate and attractive, as is his description of the courtship of the males in the air, as they seek to win their mates by marvellous aerial evolutions.

For a full week, September 14-21, he came to roost in exactly the same spot on the limb, in line with my window, where I had an excellent view of him. Every morning at six as I looked out I saw him perched there, and at six in the evening, with remarkable punctuality, he was off in search of his supper. Was he waiting here, I wondered, for others to join him in his flight along the winding coast of the Gulf to Central America, where insect food is abundant all the year round? Do these strange birds migrate in flocks or in pairs or as solitary fliers through the upper air? Through his nightly catch of insects, was he storing up energy for his long flight to new fields? Was he held up here in the city by storms in the Gulf, and was he waiting for a favourable wind to sweep him on his way? Who can tell?

Audubon, who observed and studied these birds at close range, says that they roost in hollows of dead trees and of decayed logs, where he found a number of them in the daytime lodging in company with several species of bats. 'When surprised in such situations,' he adds, 'instead of trying to escape by flying out, they retire backwards to the furthest corners, ruffle up all the feathers of their body, open their mouth to its fullest extent and utter a hissing kind of murmur not unlike that of a snake.' On capturing one and bringing it to the light, he observed that it 'opened and shut its eyes as if unable to endure the glare.' Thus it seemed all the more strange to find an individual of this species in an altogether unprotected place in a tree. Clearly he had been driven out of his usual habitat and was making the best of the situation. It was curious, too, to see him perching crosswise on a limb, for all members of this family have very small feet, placed far back of the body, so that on the ground they do not stand erect, but rest their breast on the earth and usually perch lengthwise on a limb. It is true that I have seen bullbats perching in the daytime on a telephone wire, but they are diurnal as well as nocturnal. The middle claw of each foot of the chuck-will's-widow is pectinated, shaped like a comb with teeth on each side—a peculiar feature for which Audubon could not account. But Wilson hazarded the plausible guess that it might be used to comb insects out of its feathers. Still another peculiarity is that the stiff bristles at the

base of the bill—with which nearly all insect-eaters are provided—have lateral branches, so that observed closely they look very much like the antennæ of large moths.

Audubon gives the range as Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and the Carolinas. But Wilson reports it as far north as Richmond, Virginia, and Nashville, Tennessee. I have seen reports of it in Ohio and Maryland. In Louisiana it is very rare in the alluvial section of the south-east, where it occurs as a migrant only.

Like bats and owls and all night-flying birds he is regarded with superstitious fear by ignorant folk, so that the mocking-birds are not alone in their dread of him. This attitude is reflected in the Latin name of the order to which he belongs, *Caprimulgiformes*, from *caper*, goat, and *mulgere*, to milk, and the common name 'goatsucker,' for it is a long-established and widespread belief in the Old Country and also in the New, that birds of this family fly in among the goats and draw milk from their udders. Country folk in remote regions of the South, going out with their pails to the cowpen and seeing the whip-poor-will start silently from its roosting-place on or near the ground among the cows, where the gnats are thickest, have concluded that the bird was there for no good purpose. If the cow or goat should be slow in letting down the milk, they not unnaturally infer that this night-flier had something to do with it, just as they fear that the innocent leather-wing bat may fly through the open window and suck the breath of sleeping infants. Like the quavering call of the little screech owl or the almost maniacal hoot of the great horned owl, the shrill notes of the whip-poor-will and of the chuck-will's-widow and the booming of the bullbat, as he swoops down through the air on his insect prey, are all, in the minds of the negroes and ignorant white folk, held to be portents of evil and disaster and approaching death to someone in the family.

The order of goatsuckers includes four families, distributed throughout the temperate and tropical regions of the earth: the *podargidae* (weak-footed ones), commonly called frogmouths and found in Australia; the *nyctibiidae* (night-livers), wood nightjars or potoos; the *otochelidae* (Greek name for goatsuckers), owl frogmouths; and the *caprimulgæ* (goatsuckers). The Creoles of Louisiana call the chuck-will's-widow *crapaud volant*, flying frog, for the capacious mouth readily suggested to them as to the people of Australia some kinship with the noisy denizens of the swamp.

To-day the French folk of Louisiana call the chuck-will's-widow *mangeur maringouins*, mosquito-eater, an appropriate cognomen, for its mouth, extending back of the ear, measures a full two inches across. Darting swiftly through the air with his mouth stretched to its full extent, the corners protected by bristles, he scoops in great quantities of gnats and mosquitoes, as we seine fish in the sea. Instead, then, of fearing him, we should welcome him as a beneficent night-worker, who through the hours of darkness when we are asleep labours on tireless wing to rid us of all kinds of pestiferous insects.

If in the twilight of early spring you chance to hear him call, you can easily understand how he got his queer name, for he utters with startling distinctness, 'Chuck' (followed by a slight pause); then 'will's' (with increasing emphasis, the resonant 'l' coming out clear); and finally 'wee-oh' (in which we have to supply the 'd'). The emphasis increases from the first sound to the last, being strongest on the final syllable, each note uttered with a sharp staccato effect. Although similar in sound to the cry of the whip-poor-will, one who has heard both calls is not likely to confuse the two. The chuck-will's-widow has always the preliminary 'chuck,' which distinguishes it. The whip-poor-will has the same sharp attack on each syllable, 'whip,' 'po' (like a true Southerner dropping the 'r'), 'wee-ull,' the 'po' lightly sounded, the strongest stress falling on the 'wee' of the final phrase.

I have often wondered who this Will is, for whom all the members of this family seem to have such strong aversion. One of them desires to 'chuck' Will's widow, though what harm she has done I can never guess. The other urges us to 'whip poor Will.' Was this Will some lost soul seeking through medieval flagellation to drive the devil out of himself? What has Will done to deserve such castigation? Who can answer, any more than Oliver Wendell Holmes could solve the mystery of what Katy did to account for this insect's ceaseless iteration of its own name. In North Carolina, however, the Negroes seem to know nothing of Will, for as in the twilight with lusty strokes they fell some great tree of the forest and hear the notes of the chuck-will's-widow, appearing to keep time with the blows of the axe, they interpret its message as 'Chip-fell-out-o'-white-oak' or 'Twixt-hell-and-white-oak.'

Tulane University,

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HONOURABLE GARMENTS.

BY B. M. McOWAN.

ONE of the first things a foreigner realises when he begins to get into touch with the Chinese, is that their mental attitude to the ordinary affairs of life is quite different from ours. The longer the foreigner lives with them and the better he knows them, the more convinced he becomes that he is dwelling amongst a peculiar people and that, if he would win their confidence, respect and friendship, he must not apply to them too rigidly the moral standards of the West. They have their own standards and they have not the smallest doubt that theirs are infinitely superior to ours.

At the time of the mystery of the cook's clothes I lived with my wife and family in a compound in the West Suburb of the city of Tai-an-fu. My house was near the gate and my servants' quarters were ranged along the inside of the wall which separated us from the road.

My cook was Mr. Chang Ching Ho. He was efficient and loyal. Once he nursed me through a dangerous illness. His wife did odd jobs about the house and his children fed sumptuously upon the crumbs which fell from his master's table.

One summer's morning, just after dawn, I was awakened by a hubbub in the yard. There was obviously something wrong. Slipping on my clothes, I went down to investigate. I found Chang, in a state of intense excitement and clad in unfamiliar garments, waving a white sock round his head and surrounded by the rest of the servants and others from the neighbouring houses.

'Why, what's the matter, cook?' I said.

'All my clothes, except this one sock, have been stolen,' he managed to stutter. Then losing what little control he had left, he threw the sock on the ground and span round on one heel with such velocity that his pigtail flew out and smote me lightly on the face. After several revolutions in this manner he came to rest, and, clapping his hands smartly on his thighs, suddenly assumed his normal and respectful attitude. That little ebullition of feeling had cleared the air, and he was now able to explain, with some hope of being understood, what had happened.

It seems that very early in the morning, when it was quite dark, he had been awakened by the door of his room shutting rather noisily. He rushed out into the yard and was just in time to see a man scrambling over the wall with a bundle of clothes under his arm. It was much too dark to see anything clearly, but he ran to the gate, clad as he was on his first birthday. Nevertheless, long before he had roused the gate-man, the thief had disappeared. He returned to the place where the man had climbed the wall and all he could find was the one sock.

'All have gone,' he said, 'all my clothes, my wife's best things and some of the children's. For the sake of decency I have had to borrow the clothes I am wearing, nothing is left but this,' and picking up the solitary sock, he flourished it before me.

'If the First Born will graciously condescend to take the matter up, all may yet be well,' he said. By which I was clearly given to understand that he, with the audible approval of the assembled multitude, considered that the responsibility now rested upon my shoulders and that I was expected to deal with the affair appropriately.

'All right,' I said, 'I'll do what I can. You go and find out the total value of the things you have lost.' Whereupon he departed, with two or three of his friends, to make out his little bill.

I knew, of course, that he would assess his damages at considerably more than the value of the stolen property, and so, when he told me that the lost clothes were worth 300 tiao, I told him that I would do my best to get the articles back, or, failing that, I should hope to get enough money to get him another pair of trousers. A tiao at that time was worth about ninepence. His clothes were rapidly approaching the end of their usefulness and were worth, at a generous estimate, about £1.

Now if anything was to be done about this business it must be begun at once. So a letter was sent to the local magistrate explaining what had occurred and requesting him to deal with it, either by having the clothes found and sent back, or that their value, which I stated to be 100 tiao, be paid in lieu of them.

A message came back from the Yamen, the magistrate's official residence, informing me that he was prostrated with grief at the misfortune which had befallen my cook, and that, as soon as he had recovered sufficiently to do so, he would send the Tseh Teo along to investigate, and would see that the matter was brought to a satisfactory conclusion for all parties.

The duties of the Tseh Teo, who figures so prominently in the remainder of this story, need to be explained.

His title and profession literally mean Head Thief. Before the revolution, at the time of this story, the Tseh Teo was a recognised member of every magistrate's staff and resided in the Yamen. His duties were various and peculiar. The profession of thieving, though naturally in disrepute, was a recognised profession and had its own Guild. Of this he was the head. Part of his business was to give permission to, and take the fees from, thieves from outside wishing to exercise their profession in the town. He was also expected to give timely warning to the members of his Guild of any steps being taken by the police to apprehend them.

But his most onerous duty was to suffer in his own person the beating ordered by the magistrate if he failed to produce stolen goods or their equivalent in money when ordered to do so.

These beatings might be a farce or a horrible torture. The man was thrown face downwards on the ground and the blows were administered by two lictors, one on either side, armed with clubs flattened on one side, while another man counted the strokes. It was not so much the strength of the blows as their number which marked the severity of the punishment. Any amount, from twenty to a thousand or more, might be ordered by the magistrate.

The Tseh Teo, however, had means at his disposal of tempering the wind. A little judicious bribery would reduce the blows to mere pats, although they might sound severe. And it must not be forgotten that the frequent application of this form of gingering up his activities had produced on him a hide of which a rhinoceros might have been proud.

The usual procedure was for the magistrate to give the Tseh Teo three days in which to produce the goods or the money. If neither was forthcoming then, he was ordered a beating and given another three days, and so on. Between the beatings he would attempt to persuade the man who had lost the goods that it was useless to hope for either the goods or the money, and would paint a lurid picture of his sufferings and imminent dissolution, in the hope that the magistrate would be asked to proceed no further. But that little game seldom came off except, perhaps, with a tender-hearted foreigner.

And so the time would arrive when he must either convince the magistrate that he really could not find either the goods or the

money, or else suffer a beating which the magistrate, who by this time would have lost patience, would personally superintend.

It was a very delicate situation. If he carried on too long he would get a beating which might maim him for life. If he gave up too soon he would make nothing out of the transaction, and on the top of that would lose face with his Guild—a most serious catastrophe.

We were just sitting down to tiffin when I was informed that the Tseh Teo was outside and wished to see me. I went on to the veranda and found a woebegone, bedraggled creature in semi-official clothes, waiting on the path below. He was indescribably dirty; his clothes were old and torn; his shoes, of the kind worn by the poorest coolies, were kept on his feet by pieces of string tied round his ankles.

On seeing me, he performed the ceremonial gymnastic operation known as the 'tseo-i.' Kneeling on the right knee and touching the ground with his right hand, he rose, and clasping his hands together, raised them to his face and made a low bow. Then, standing to attention, he waited for me to speak.

'What is your honourable name, sir?' I asked him.

'My contemptible name is Wong, but I have not asked your exalted name,' he replied.

'My unworthy name is Ma,' I told him. 'And what is your honourable age?'

'I have grown up in vain for forty-five years.'

'A truly remarkable performance.'

And so we went through the usual conventional courtesies until we got to the point where it was proper to ask him his business.

He had heard with great sorrow, he said, of the terrible misfortune which had befallen my cook, but a still greater calamity was hanging over his own head. The magistrate had told him that morning that unless he found the lost clothes within three days he would be beaten within an inch of his life. How was he, miserable old man that he was, to find the things when he knew nothing at all about them? Would not the Great Man (meaning me) intercede with the magistrate on his behalf and so save his life?

I said it was not for me, a stranger in his honourable country, to attempt to interfere with the course of justice. Moreover, it

was an easy matter for him, if he could not produce the clothes, to find 100 tiao instead.

'Me find 100 tiao! Me! Why, I haven't a cash to find a morsel of food. Surely the Great Man is joking.'

Nothing, I told him, was further from my intention than to introduce a note of levity into such a serious matter, and, as I was sure he was anxious to get to work at once with the business of finding the stolen property, I should look forward to seeing him again in less than three days when, I felt sure, he would bring with him either the missing garments or 100 tiao. And so, after an exchange of parting courtesies, he left the compound. I noticed, as a rather significant detail, that he neither asked to see the cook, nor did he trouble to examine the scene of the robbery.

The following day I received a deputation of shop-keepers from the street outside. They came to say that they had heard with great satisfaction that I was taking steps to enforce the return of the stolen clothes, and that they hoped that I would proceed to the bitter end as the street had suffered much at the hands of the thieves; also, the fee for immunity required by the Tseh Teo was exorbitant and more than they could afford. I thanked them for their interest in the case and promised to carry on 'tao ti' (i.e. down to the ground). I knew that this interview would be reported to the Tseh Teo and would materially assist him in coming to a decision as to when would be the time to throw up the sponge and deliver the goods.

Two days after he turned up again. I met him as before, though the preliminary courtesies were omitted.

He was a picture of acute misery. He was without his gown, coat or hat. His trousers were torn, exhibiting large areas of skin smeared with what looked like blood but which was red paint. Tears were rolling down his cheeks and in a voice broken with emotion, he assured me that he was at the point of death. He said he had failed to find the clothes. The magistrate had ordered him to be beaten and had told him that if, at the end of another three days, he had not produced the things or the money, he himself would superintend the next beating. He said he dared not face it. Would I, for pity's sake, call the magistrate off?

I told him I should be very happy to write to the Yamen as soon as he had complied with his orders, but until then, the affair was in the magistrate's hands and I could not interfere.

I left him and went to my study from whence I could hear him

groaning and occasionally crying: 'Ko-lien wo pa, ko-lien wo,' 'Pity me, pity me.' Looking out of the window a few minutes later, I saw him in earnest conversation with the cook and the table-boy, and presently the latter came in and told me that the Tseh Teo wished to speak to me again.

I went outside. There he was—but what a change! No tears, no whine, no sign of discomfort in that part of his person so gaily decorated with red paint.

'Great Man,' he said, in a friendly, man-to-man kind of voice, 'I have decided that this matter shall be settled peacefully as between friends. Will you accept 25 tiao in lieu of the clothes which I cannot find?'

I replied that I was delighted to hear that the affair was going to be amicably settled, but I regretted that I was unable to reduce the amount claimed, which was much less than the original estimate of the value of the clothes.

To my surprise he replied that as the Great Man's heart had not been touched by his misery, he supposed he would have to sell his wife and family, his house and all that he had in order that everyone concerned might know that he was an honest man. Would it be convenient if he came the following day when the sun was about there, pointing to where the sun ought to be about three o'clock? It would?—Good—and would the Great Man invite some witnesses to be present that they might see, and afterwards bear testimony to, the nobility of his character?

I promised to have the witnesses ready for him, and so, making a profound bow, he went away.

This change in the situation gave me furiously to think. However, as thinking furiously or otherwise about the devious ways of this mysterious people does not lead to much enlightenment, I gave it up and made preparations for the ceremony of the following day. I invited the head man of the street, with two of his friends, to be present, and ordered tea and cakes to be prepared on the veranda.

When the fateful day arrived I noticed a good deal of suppressed excitement in the servants' quarters, though the cook and table-boy, when in the house, were as impassive and sphinx-like as only Chinese can be.

The first to arrive were the three gentry from the street. They were met with the usual ceremony at the gate and escorted to the veranda. The table-boy was at hand, ready to bring the tea.

The cook was not to be seen, but his wife was peeping round the corner with her children hiding behind her gown. My wife took up a strategic position at one of the bedroom windows, while my small son, who declined to be left out of anything likely to be interesting, occupied a front seat on the veranda, with his back against one of the posts.

'Boy, bring tea,' I said.

Tea was brought, poured out into the cups and handed by the host with both hands, to each of the guests. They received it standing, also with both hands, and, bowing politely, sat down, placing the cups on the table untasted.

And now the moment for which we had all been waiting arrived. The Tseh Teo stalked slowly, and with great dignity, down the path until he stood before us.

He was dressed in his best; a long, fairly clean gown, a jacket with enormously wide sleeves, new shoes, and a new official hat on his head.

He drew himself up to his full height, then made a deep bow, first to me, then to each of the guests and, finally, to my youngster who was so surprised at the honour done to him that he nearly fell off the veranda.

This ceremony over, he drew from his sleeve a roll of dirty notes and handed them to me without a word.

I took them to the table and counted them, removing three for further consideration. The amount was checked by each of the witnesses and pronounced correct, but all condemned the three notes I had taken out of the bundle as bad and worthless. I gave them back to the Tseh Teo, explaining that no doubt in his great anxiety to settle the affair he had inadvertently included these bad notes in the roll. We would wait here until he had changed them if he would be so good as to do so at once.

He left the compound but returned so quickly that I have no doubt that he had the good notes ready in his sleeve.

Having received them and put them in my pocket with the others, I made a little speech in which I complimented the Tseh Teo on the promptness, punctuality and exactitude with which he had concluded the affair, and expressed a hope that I should have no further dealing with him in his official capacity.

He replied that he had been impressed with the justice, humanity and wisdom I had displayed in the management of this little business and that, for his part, he promised me, and called upon the three

witnesses to mark his words, that never again should I or my servants be robbed while he occupied the responsible and honourable position of Head Thief in that town.

I then gave him a letter to the magistrate and bowed him out, and that was the last I ever saw of him, for he was as good as his word.

After the guests had left I called the cook into the study and presented him with the 100 tiao which he received with many expressions of gratitude and devotion.

Thus ended the little comedy, and all in the garden seemed lovely. But I should dearly like to know how it was that, shortly afterwards, my cook appeared in the clothes which had been stolen.

SONGS AND POEMS.

Songs and poems rare there are
Set about with fantasy
Like the ripples of a sea
Spill'd on fairy beaches far :
These are like the lanterns gay,
Like the spices and the sweets
Making glad through crowded streets
Festivals of old Cathay :

Other songs and poems seem
Like the apples and the cherries,
Apricots and logan-berries
In the gardens of our dream :
Such the happy songs we sing
In the days of childhood's laughter,
Such the songs that then and after
Songbirds on the breezes fling :

There are songs and poems yet,
Touching hopes and fears and sorrows,
Sad to-days and vague to-morrows,
To a scale more solemn set.
Sweeter than all else to me,
When you speak, unbidden trips
From your red rose-petal lips
Life's authentic melody.

PATRICK FORD.

DESERT IDYLLS.

IV. THE EIGHTH PLAGUE.

BY MAJOR C. S. JARVIS.

'And the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning the east wind brought the locusts.'—Exodus x. 13.

QUITE the most exciting time I had in Sinai was in connection with the locust plague which occurred in the spring of 1930. It was not altogether unexpected for experts at the Ministry of Agriculture had arrived at the conclusion that swarms might visit Egypt every ten years, and as the last invasion had happened in 1915 it seemed more or less indicated that the next was due, or rather overdue, by 1930. During the autumn of 1929 I received telegrams constantly from Cairo anxiously enquiring about locusts, but I had no news of them, although a large swarm had been reported at Port Said by an expert and pertinent questions were asked as to how they could have reached the town from the east without passing through Sinai. I had no idea myself and was beginning to think my police patrols had let me down when I heard unofficially that the Port Said locusts were dragon-flies; but I was asked to say nothing about it out of respect for the dignity of the official who had reported them, as he, being a locust expert, should not have made a mistake of this description.

A few days later a telephone message arrived to say that the locusts had arrived at Kosseima, but as I did not wish to drop the same brick as the Port Said informer I went down to Kosseima and found a healthy flight of dragon-flies in progress. It is a little thoughtless of dragon-flies to swarm in this fashion when locusts are expected, especially in a country where very little attention is paid normally to any insect that flies.

Two days later, however, I ran into a real swarm of red locusts near the Palestine Frontier that gave me some indication of what I was up against, and for ten miles I drove through a cloud of insects that smashed themselves against the wind-screen, choked the radiator, and filled the car. On every patch of scrub they were so thick that all one could see was a glistening, undulating red mass

that looked both ominous and unclean, and, though it would be an exaggeration to say that they turned day into night, the flying insects were sufficiently thick in the air to throw a definite shadow across the sun. The swarm was ten miles deep and, though I travelled some distance east and west to find the beginning and end of the column, I was unable to discover the length, so I went back and sent an alarmist telegram about a swarm, ten miles deep, length unknown but definitely over twenty miles and travelling west towards Egypt. The reply I received was, 'Swarm you have reported are sexually immature. Do not lose sight of them.' Personally, I should have thought that sexually immature insects were less in need of a chaperon than mature ones, but we obeyed orders and managed to keep them in sight till the 'Flame Gunners' despatched from Cairo arrived in a lorry—and then the fun started.

The flame gun that is used to exterminate locusts is precisely the same weapon as that employed by our humane enemy in the late war for the extermination of British Infantry in the trenches. It is, to be brief, a canister filled up with paraffin to which is attached a length of hose and a nozzle. The canister is pumped up as one pumps a Primus stove, the tap in the nozzle opened, a match applied, and a flame some ten yards long shoots out, leaving a film of oil on everything it touches that continues to burn for two or three minutes after the flame has passed. It is a most invigorating and thrilling sight to see a roaring flame strike a dense mass of locusts and watch the insects shrivel up and disappear. One feels no scruples whatsoever, as one has only to look at a garden or patch of corn after the passage of a swarm of locusts for the complete elimination of any feelings about cruelty to insects that otherwise one might have had.

At the end of an hour we had used up a complete lorry-load of paraffin and, though we had burned countless millions of locusts, we had actually made about as much impression on the swarm as one would achieve in trying to empty the Mediterranean by ladling it out with a bucket for an hour. The next supply of paraffin would take two days to reach us, and it was therefore fairly obvious from the start that one might have quite an amusing time with flame guns, but that as locust exterminators they were to all intents and purposes useless and, last but not least, extremely expensive.

I estimated that if we really stuck to the job in hand we might, if the paraffin were available, finish off this particular swarm in three months, provided of course that the locusts themselves were

willing to hang about in country negotiable by cars. The situation, however, was considerably obscured by the arrival of fresh swarms in every part of the Peninsula, and as a result the telegraph wires hummed between El Arish and Cairo; but beyond the despatch of a few more flame guns nothing happened. Egypt at that time was suffering from a bad dose of politics and nobody felt inclined to listen to the repeated warnings given by the Ministry of Agriculture to the effect that the country was threatened by a plague of locusts and that the enemy was actually at the door. For two months we continued to fight the ever-increasing swarms with totally inadequate resources, realising that we were making practically no impression on them, and then one day a small reconnoitring flight of locusts flew across the Suez Canal and—very unwisely from their point of view—elected to settle in the public garden opposite the Ministry of Finance; and then Egypt woke up to the danger! This is what is called 'bringing things home to one,' and if the locusts had really wished to have a peaceful time procuring their species in comparative peace in the Sinai Peninsula, they should have avoided the public gardens opposite the Ministry of Finance like the plague. 'Seeing is believing,' we are told, and as every Minister in the Government had seen the locusts with his own eyes, and as every Minister at that time was either a landowner or personally interested in the cotton crop, the result was electrifying. Immediately there started to pour into Sinai all the men, transport, and appliances for which we had been clamouring for months, and, what was still more to the point, a special credit was opened which enabled money to be spent without the hundred and one irritating delays that attend normal Government expenditure and make celerity impossible.

By this time the survivors of the first swarms had changed colour, the males acquiring a vivid green suiting instead of red, whilst the females contented themselves with a more sober array of yellowish brown. This change of colour denoted sexual maturity and immediately the females proceeded to lay eggs in the sand. The hen locust is capable of laying a hundred eggs, which are glued together by means of a secretion in the shape of a cone and are inserted into the damp sand to a depth of four to five inches. Experts told us quite confidently that female locusts would lay only one batch in one spot and would then die conveniently, and that the eggs would not hatch unless there was a certain amount of moisture in the sand to assist incubation; but our particular

locusts were not going to be tied down by any pettifogging regulations of this description—they laid eggs but flatly refused to die and presumably went off to contract fresh alliances, and the egg hatch would have delighted the heart of a poultry farmer as the full hundred per cent. was achieved whether there was humidity or not.

There are several methods of dealing with the eggs of the locust, none of them entirely satisfactory. We tried ploughing the land and exposing the egg cones to the air, but for every cone that the plough exposed to the sun there were ten that were turned over and still remained covered with soil, and this had no effect—in fact like intensive cultivation round the roots of fruit trees it seemed to increase the fertility.

Another method we tried was the collection of egg cones by the children of Arabs, but before one starts to do this it is essential that one obtains reliable data as to how many cones the average child can collect in a day. We underestimated it lamentably, and at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per kilogramme we had to pay out as much as $7s.$ a day to tiny Arab brats, both male and female, what time their revered sires were earning no more than $1s. 3d.$ a day. This was so bad for parental authority that we received innumerable complaints, but the solution suggested by the adult Arabs that their pay should be increased in the same ratio did not meet with approval, whilst a reduction in the price paid for egg cones so incensed the juvenile plutocrats that they went on strike promptly—it is quaint how the tenets of Trade Unionism in its worst form lie dormant but ready to be awakened amongst the most uncivilised races—and even amongst their young.

The whole of the Arab and Arishy population of Sinai had been enlisted for the work of trench digging and locust driving and were paid at the rate of six piastres, i.e. $1s. 3d.$, a day, whilst special mobile corps of Arabs mounted on their own camels were raised to deal with swarms in inaccessible places. These mounted Columns were christened the Royal Locust Hussars and were supposed to be picked men, all of whom could supply a first-class camel for the work. Unfortunately as the pay for this branch of the service was $\pounds 5$ per month including the camel hire every Arab in Sinai decided he would be a Hussar, and if he did not possess a good camel he turned up brazenly on parade with anything he could find, and some of them had the impertinence to line up for enlistment with six-months'-old calves that had not shed their milk teeth and which were smaller than their owners. At the first parade for enlistment

I fell out some twenty or more on account of the size of their camels, and whilst moving down the line detected a movement in rear which proved to be, as I expected, the time-honoured ruse of temporarily borrowing—or more probably hiring—a suitable camel that I had passed and falling in again at the end of the line. Unfortunately for the would-be recruits I had served my time in an Infantry battalion and in the course of my service had done many kit inspections, so that I possessed that sixth sense, combined with an ability to see out of the corner of the eye, that used to enable me to perceive a pair of socks or a shirt from an inspected kit shooting across the room to make up a deficiency in a friend's outfit—and a full-sized camel comes easy after a small thing like a shirt.

At this stage of the campaign we were dealing not only with the small black hopper locusts that had just hatched from the eggs, but also with fresh swarms that suddenly arrived from Arabia during the short breathing-space that elapsed between the laying of the eggs and incubation. This meant that the whole of Sinai—an area as big as Scotland—was literally infested with the insects, and the situation was complicated by the fact that they were in all stages. In one spot a gang of men would be employed digging and ploughing in an egg area; five miles away flame gunners would be engaged in burning out swarms of mature locusts; while close beside them would be a long line of workmen hastily digging a trench across the advance of a mass of five-day-old black hoppers. The Government, however, were by this time fully alive to the danger of the situation, realising that if even a quarter of the locusts escaped from the Sinai desert to the Nile Valley the whole of Egypt's crops were imperilled, and as Egypt is almost entirely an agricultural country, the loss of the corn crops would have meant a famine; whilst the destruction of the cotton spelt ruination and the extinction of half Egypt's revenue.

The Egyptian Army was detailed to take part in the war, and we therefore had the services of some three thousand hefty Egyptian fellahen who are capable of putting in a day of twelve hours' solid toil without any disturbing thoughts about eight-hour days, a midday dinner, and double pay for overtime. At first it was a trifle difficult to get things working smoothly as the Egyptian officers objected to take orders from the agricultural experts who were in charge of areas, and I was kept very busy for the first week dealing with cases of offended dignity, and when the fragile flower of dignity is damaged it is exceedingly difficult to get it to bloom

again—or in fact to get anything to happen. Also at first locust fighting appeared to be a very dirty and degrading business for a commissioned officer to take part in—something not quite in keeping with the military tradition—but when they saw some of the British officers take their coats off and lend a hand at digging when the situation became desperate, they entered into the spirit of the thing and in a week's time it was difficult to detect the officer in charge of a party, as he was usually far more grimed with smoke from the flame guns than his men, and this was all to the good.

One of the most successful methods of dealing with the black hoppers was the construction of a trench with sheer sides cut across the line of march. The hopper is wingless and about the size of an ordinary English cricket, and, having decided on the route he proposes to take, he starts to march steadily in that direction and his movements are exactly like the slow advance of flood water over dry land and just as relentless. Looking at a swarm of hoppers crawling across the desert from a distance is like watching a slow but steady inundation by a black flood, as the insects follow every depression in the ground, and when the undulating mass with its uniform forward movement comes to a patch of country with hummocks dotted here and there, the line swirls inwards into fast-running streams, passes through the channels between the hummocks and then, with its constant trickling motion, spreads out again across the flat. These young locusts are evidently driven forward by some strong migratory instinct and, though the winged insect alters its route according to the wind from necessity, the direction of the hopper swarms seldom changes, unless some obstruction bars their progress. It was found that they objected to cross a track on which cars were constantly passing and the railway line had some unaccountable attraction for them. They could hop over the metals with ease, but the permanent way proved a barrier to most swarms which, after travelling northwards, turned either east or west and hopped along the line, thus bringing the Jerusalem express to a halt on three occasions. When one reads that a train is stopped by a swarm of locusts one envisages a pile of insects six feet deep through which the engine cannot plough its way. What actually happens, however, is that the wheels, after churning up countless millions of locusts, become so covered with slime that they fail to grip the metals, no matter how much sand the driver may let down to counteract the greasiness.

A trench dug across the line of advance of the hoppers did not

cause them to alter their course, therefore when a swarm was detected a company of soldiers or gang of workmen were hurried out and a trench rapidly constructed some distance in front of their vanguard. It was necessary to keep the far side of the trench absolutely sheer and every thirty yards or so to dig a deep pit. The advancing hoppers would come merrily on, hop straight into the trench and then turn either right or left and continue their march till they fell into one of the pits. These pits quickly became full to the brim, and then soldiers with suitable-sized feet would proceed to dance the Charleston on the swarm till it was sufficiently churned up to enable the resulting mass of glutinous horror to be shovelled out and the pit left empty for the next contingent. It was not as easy as it sounds, for in places the sides of the trench would fall in and before this was discovered an enormous crowd of locusts would swarm over the breach and continue their advance. It would seem also that the hoppers had some system of passing orders, as immediately a break in a trench occurred the word would be given to turn inwards and a veritable river would surge through the defences. Occasionally, also, the swarms got some inkling of the trouble before them and would march with their left or right 'shoulders up' so that the change of direction would bring them round the end of the trench line. These disasters always seemed to occur about two o'clock in the afternoon when the defending line was beginning to feel the results of a heavy day's work in a blazing sun and parties of trench diggers were seeking a scrub bush to provide enough shade for an afternoon siesta.

Immediately the break through was discovered a party of flame gunners would be despatched on trotting camels, or lorries if the country were suitable, to hold the line temporarily, while a second trench was constructed. And in cases where the soil was hard or great haste was essential sheets of tin were erected in a continuous line, with 'mass assassination' pits every fifty yards. Luckily the Shell Company of Egypt sell their petrol in four-gallon tins which they make up at their factory from tin sheets. The strip of metal that forms the sides of the tin was eminently suited for our purpose and we bought up their whole stock so that the Company were seriously hampered in the sale of their spirit till a fresh supply of tin would be obtained from England.

The intensive part of the locust war coincided with the bird migration which takes place through Sinai every autumn and spring, and there was great excitement one day when welcome

reinforcements in the shape of some two thousand storks put in an appearance. I went out to see them and found them very busy on a sandy plain south of El Arish, which at that time was black with a mass of half-grown hoppers. The storks were walking about in a mincing fashion with their heads down and every few minutes they straightened themselves out and gulped violently till the visible lump in their necks travelled downwards. After a moment spent in blissful contemplation of the surrounding country during the passing of the locusts to their crops, they put their heads down again and the steady peck-peck continued. Usually when the storks arrive in Sinai on their homeward flight they find food extremely scarce and the excitement caused by the whole desert being covered with appetising meals knocked them out of their normal dignified calm. I was delighted to see them and wondered how long they would be able to continue the good work when the senior lady of the party obviously 'collected eyes' and the whole mass flapped languidly off to a neighbouring hill where they alighted heavily like gorged vultures. They remained there in a more or less torpid condition till the afternoon, when they had a second heavy meal, at the end of which there was a big meeting on the hill where all the senior birds gave their opinion on the situation. The stork is a wise bird and apparently the elders had decided that three heavy meals a day in the migrating season was most unwise, as it might mean disaster due to acute indigestion when they were over the middle of the Mediterranean, not to mention a lamentable and undesirable increase in weight. Whether my surmise was correct or not, the fact remains that at sunset the whole party got up and after two circles over the rich repast they were leaving winged their way slowly northwards and we saw them no more.

Shortly afterwards the bee-eaters arrived. Normally they draw their rations from my bee-hives, but this year, finding a plentiful supply of insects before they reached my garden, they settled on the telephone lines in a long line of green, chestnut or yellow. The bee-eater arrives very hungry, as I know to my cost, and it was a wonderful sight to see the constant flash of brilliant colour as the birds swooped down from the wire and returned to swallow the insects. The good work went on for an hour and then the flights became less and less frequent and lacking in grace of movement, till finally the telephone wire was sagging heavily under a long row of ruffled feathered bundles, and dyspepsia reigned supreme. The invincible locust was once again master of the situation.

Previously I had always considered that Sinai was singularly free from snakes, as in eight years' experience of the Peninsula I had not seen more than a dozen, but the locust war proved that they were far more general than I had supposed, and every day during the campaign I killed two or three. I imagine that the intensive flame gunning of every patch of scrub must have driven them out, as the snake seen most often was the horned viper—a repulsive little reptile that usually lies buried in the sand with only his eyes and his venomous horn exposed. When disturbed he moves by raising his coils laterally, and for this reason the Arabs call him 'Abu Jenabiya' (the Father of Going Sideways). Another variety was a small whip-like fellow who travelled so fast that one could never be certain whether one had really seen a snake flash into a patch of scrub, whether it was imagination, or the first stages of D.T's. The horned viper I know is poisonous, as I have had to deal with several cases of bites from the reptile, though if taken in time they are not fatal; but I never discovered if the whip snake was venomous or not, and it is useless to ask Arabs as they condemn the whole serpent genus as being deadly, which on the whole is the safest attitude.

As time went on the situation became steadily worse, as not only were we still fighting and destroying the offspring of the original invaders, which had now grown their wings, but were also dealing with fresh swarms, eggs, and hoppers in every stage of their existence, from minute black insects with abnormally large heads to aggressive-looking fellows arrayed in black with a smart pale green stripe. We had something like 300 flame guns in constant action and as a flame gun consumes a matter of sixteen gallons of paraffin in an hour some idea may be obtained of the vast amount of fuel that had to be distributed to the various fighting stations daily. The transport available was woefully inadequate and our troubles coming to the ears of the G.O.C. British Troops in Egypt, an offer of some Royal Army Service Corps lorries was kindly made, and accepted gratefully.

A telegram was received to the effect that the vehicles with one officer and twenty non-commissioned officers and men were leaving Cairo by special train and I detailed one of my Egyptian staff officers to see that a suitable camp was pitched. This particular officer had a very hearty admiration for the British Army and apparently also a very exaggerated idea of the comfort in which the British private lives and has his being, for when I went down to see the camp I found that he had pitched a ridge pole

double-fly tent for every two soldiers and had furnished each with two camp beds, two chairs, a dressing-table complete with mirror, a washstand with glass and water-bottle, and a strip of carpet tastefully laid in the centre of the tent. A dining-tent with tables and chairs had been erected and a sumptuous supper prepared, each man's place at the table being flanked by two bottles of beer—my Egyptian officer having obtained his knowledge of the British Army from the 'old sweat' of war days.

Apparently as the troops were travelling by goods train on account of their lorries, they spent over eighteen hours on the journey from Cairo to El Arish and had a fairly rough and uncomfortable time. They arrived in El Arish station at 1 a.m. very weary and hungry, and with visions of pitching their own camp in the darkness were feeling none too happy about it. The Sergeant got out of the train first and, having viewed the camp which was pitched by the railway siding, was so overcome he could do nothing but suck his teeth and mutter 'Blimey.'

He then went back to the train and shouted for his men to turn out. The row of blanket-covered figures in the trucks tossed and heaved and a few sulphurous remarks about Egypt and all it contained were heard.

'Come on—turn out,' shouted the Sergeant. 'Your camp's ready pitched with beds for every man and tables and chairs and washstands and looking-glasses and a strip of red carpet for every mother's son of you to put your pink toes on. And there's a hot supper waiting with two bottles of beer for each man.'

'Go on, Sergeant,' muttered a sleepy, incredulous voice, 'go on, pull the other ruddy leg—it's got more bells on it.'

The British troops added that delightful touch of humour to the campaign that had been lacking till their arrival. They were most phlegmatic about the whole business and carried on as if locust-fighting had been part of their curriculum from the earliest days of their service, but they were frankly sceptical about the matter and painfully outspoken on all questions concerning the Sinai desert which they thought intolerable, in lieu of a harsher word.

'I can't see what all the worry is about,' the Sergeant complained to me. 'There's no need to kill these blinking locusts, as if they're left alone the —s will die of boredom same as we will if we stop here much longer. The fact that they came here at all shows they've no ruddy sense.'

The British soldiers' successful and extremely simple method

of making themselves understood by the Arabs won my admiration, as they at once learned four Arabic words, i.e. *imshi* (go), *mafish* (nothing or finished), *shoof* (look), and *taala henna* (come here), and with this meagre vocabulary, interspersed in various places in a purely English sentence plus a few purely decorative adjectives, they could make their meaning perfectly clear to the Arab labourers. I have frequently heard young British officials with a very fair knowledge of Arabic and its grammar fail utterly to get an Arab to understand a single word of what they were saying, but one of these British privates had only to bawl out, 'Hi you, Johnny, *shoof* (look). Take those tins of blank petrol out of the ruddy lorry and *imshi* (go) with them to that black bloke over there and then *taala henna* (come here) and take the ruddy paraffin to the dump by the side of the ruddy road and when it's *mafish* (finished) load up the empty tins and look ruddy sharp about it.' And the Arab would shout briskly '*Mafoom, effendi*' (understood, sir), and carry out the instructions exactly as ordered. I often used to think I had wasted my time learning a very difficult language when a British private could do equally well, if not better, with a vocabulary of four words—but then the British private is no ordinary man.

As a direct result of the English Army's stay in Sinai a young Arab sheikh who had been in close touch with the troops during their sojourn in the desert came to greet me at an official Beduin meeting with an obeisance and a hearty 'Cheerio, Boy,' and on leaving the Court he bent over my hand and said, 'So long, towney, see you Monday morning.' These were stately English salutations he had learnt from the Ingleezi soldiers after a long and careful study of their classical language.

Shortly after the locust war had got into full swing the Ministry of Agriculture had sent down several huge sacks of poisoned bran with instructions to experiment with it by strewing it in the path of the advancing locusts. For some unexplained reason, this method of fighting the insect failed utterly to find favour in Sinai. I am not sure whether our staff regarded the use of poison as being not quite in accordance with the best Geneva traditions, or whether they were loath to discard the flame gun with its spectacular results for the more insidious and less inspiring system of spreading poison in the track of the invader. In any case, our locust-fighting commanders one and all condemned the poisoned bran as being *mush nafi* (no good), and it would appear that a 'Society for the Prevention of the Use of Poisoned Bran' was formed. However much

we urged the use of the stuff, the result was always the same and we found sacks of bran lying idle at the various encampments, what time the incessant war with flame guns and its concomitant heavy expenditure of paraffin continued unabated.

The bran was the ordinary waste product of wheat slightly sweetened with molasses and impregnated with arsenic, and the proportion of poison in the mixture was so small that even a tiny insect like a locust did not die at once. Experts gave it as their opinion that it would kill in two days, but as experience proved that it took anything up to five days before death occurred our locust commanders lost all confidence in it and either refused to use it or employed it in such a fashion that it was useless. Meanwhile, we were fighting a losing battle—the best we could do was to hold certain lines of trenches, but day after day for two months the swarms came hopping from the sandy wastes and in many places the troops were driven back—one particular contingent having to retire twenty-five miles owing to their flank being turned again and again. The situation by the end of May was definitely worse than it had been at the outset of the campaign in March, and it looked as if we were merely throwing money away in a vain attempt to defeat Nature—and then reports began to trickle in of success with poisoned bran. I thought at first that our forces had become weary of that fascinating new toy, the flame gun, and sick of the incessant stench of paraffin smoke and grilled locust, but it would seem that the change of front was due solely to the bran proving its potency in a most unexpected and regrettable fashion. By this time we were mixing our own poisoned bran on the spot to maintain its freshness and a party of very sceptical Arabs, under a still more sceptical official, were languidly shovelling over a vast heap of the product in the desert and impregnating it with molasses and arsenic when the camels of the party scenting the bran came up and started to feed from the heap. Such was the general lack of faith in the stuff that no one interfered and in ten minutes' time four camels were stretched in the throes of death whilst six others showed signs of violent poisoning. The excitement and alarm were intense and half the party rushed to succour the camels, the other half dashing to the telephone to put in an exaggerated claim to Headquarters for the animals lost through their own neglect; and to round off a really thrilling evening the whole party drank from the petrol tin in which the arsenic had been mixed and which, after a rough sluice with water, they considered quite suitable as a

drinking vessel. That evening the doctor brought in to the hospital a lorry-load of writhing and screaming Arabs—and arsenical poisoning can be extremely unpleasant and frightening. However, none of them died and they suffered in a good cause, as after this episode poisoned bran firmly established itself as a very redoubtable weapon indeed, and from that day the tide of battle turned in our favour.

Poisoning parties were sent out in all directions with lorry-loads of bran and in a very short time wide belts of the stuff were laid across the track of every advancing swarm. It was now late spring and the natural desert herbage had begun to dry up, so that the locusts were ravenously hungry, and every morning one would find that on the far side of the belts of bran the insects were moving with less *joie de vivre* and that their incessant hop-hop had lost its accustomed snap and vigour, while here and there were some who had done themselves too well and were as the result already dead or dying. The following day it would be found that the swarm had lost all sense of discipline, and were moving sluggishly with signs of paralysis in every direction, whilst the whole area would be littered with the bodies of the dead; and by the fourth day the slaughter was complete—the whole swarm that had passed the poisoned bran were lying like a black carpet of death over acres of desert.

At last we had got the enemy on the run and devised a means of fighting them effectively, and the troops and officials, inspired with the hope of ending the campaign before the intense heat of summer made the desert unbearable, worked by day and night to bring the war to a close. The flame guns were packed up and put away, and instead lorries piled high with bulging sacks carried the bran to all corners of the Peninsula till every wadi and water-course was strewn with the stuff. Day after day reports came in to the effect that certain areas were clear of locusts, till at last there remained one swarm only which was marching along the banks of the Suez Canal near Ismailieh and which before they were annihilated put up a most spectacular and despairing effort to reach Egypt by attempting to swim the Canal. This brought the campaign to a very fitting close, for, though the insects took to the water of their own volition, and had in fact done so on two or three occasions previously, we naturally took full credit for the move, and the Egyptian newspapers, entering into the spirit of the thing, came out with suitable headlines: 'Sinai Locust Campaign over. Last survivors driven into the Canal,' which, if not strictly true, was nevertheless most gratifying.

THE RUNNING BROOKS.

- Timbuctoo* : Leland Hall (Cresset Press, 8s. 6d. n.).
Cape Farewell : Harry Martinsson (Cresset Press, 8s. 6d. n.).
Sword for Hire : Douglas V. Duff (Murray, 10s. 6d. n.).
In All Countries : John dos Passos (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.).
The Treasure of the Sierra Madre : B. Traven (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d. n.).
The Old Inns of England : A. E. Richardson (Batsford, 7s. 6d. n.).
The Memoirs of a Bookman : James Milne (Murray, 12s. n.).
Modern Poetry : Compiled by Maurice Wollman (Macmillan, 6s. n.).
The Goose-Man : Jacob Wassermann (Allen & Unwin, 10s. n.).
Problems of Personal Life : Count Hermann Keyserling (Cape, 7s. 6d. n.).
Suburban Saga : H. V. H. Hedges (Murray, 7s. 6d. n.).
Elizabeth : Frank Swinnerton (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d. n.).
Dew on the Grass : Eiluned Lewis (Dickson, 7s. 6d. n.).

WITH the close of the holiday season, the reluctant ending of long days by sea and river, on mountain and moor, with the din of city streets again about us, the temporarily realised cramping of mind and body that the return to routine inevitably brings, such a book as Mr. Leland Hall's *Timbuctoo* is both an inspiration and a solace. Its very title has about it a traditional distance, a remoteness in time and space that recalls the glamour of adventure begun instead of ended, an inaccessibility that is the antithesis of the humdrum and familiar. Yet we have hardly arrived with Mr. Hall in the famous city crumbling in the sands of the Sahara than already we are at home, keenly aware of a place and a people that are strange only by comparison; quickly accustomed to the flat-roofed houses of beaten earth, to the ceaseless, almost soundless, padding of bare or slippered feet in the ever-drifting sand, and conscious always of the 'sea of light' under which the city appears as if flattened and withdrawn upon itself. And the people of these vivid, simple pages are as realistic as their background. Unidealised, but most sympathetically drawn with an understanding of an alien point of view completely devoid of patronage, they make a memorable group—humorous, tragic, dignified, absurd and kind. For its character-studies alone the volume would have been well worth writing. Framed as they are, the book is a fine one for reading, a fine one to possess.

In Mr. Harry Martinsson's *Cape Farewell* the horizons are still wider flung, contacts even more varied, distances traversed immense. For the author, who ran away from his Swedish 'charity' home at the age of twelve in order to assure himself that the Göta Canal really existed outside geography lessons, has served as a ship's

fireman on most of the seas and in many of the ports of the world. In this series of eighteen excellently translated sketches he records experiences, impressions and reactions in language that rises at times to the level of poetry. Such richness of vocabulary, such instinctive feeling for the exactly right word or phrase are, in the circumstances of his implied upbringing and vocation, almost startling. He handles sentences as a sculptor handles clay, shaping and moulding them till they stand out from the printed pages—here a lovely model of a ship in high relief, there a crouching group of sweat-grimed figures in a stokehold; here a surge of cantering buffaloes, there the outline of a Ferris wheel climbing, with swinging gondolas, above the night lights of Bombay. Humour is here too, as well as a youthful seriousness that is something more than naïve. Of such a quality is Mr. Martinsson's story of the fire-ball by which he was imprisoned within a wire fence, of its capture and ultimate ascension to a cloud through the medium of a gun fired from a ship's rigging. A remarkable book and a remarkable man.

Gallant good humour is the key-note of Mr. Douglas V. Duff's entertaining volume, *Sword for Hire*, in which he recounts experiences so varied as to leave the reader amazed that they could all have fallen to the lot of one man. Revolution in South America; the sinking of two vessels in which he served as midshipman during the War (on one of which occasions he was the sole survivor of the ship's company); the novitiate of an English monastery; adventures with the Black and Tans and, most interesting of all, the ten years spent as an officer of the Palestine Police are among the subjects that fill these often gay, always courageous, pages with life and colour. A book that provides excellent entertainment as well as much food for thought.

In contrast with such first-hand experiences lived and fought the account by Mr. John dos Passos of places, things, and people observed in Russia, Mexico, America and Spain has all the verisimilitude, yet the comparative flatness of a cinematograph reel. In common with Mr. Martinsson, the author has the gift of words, but he is, in the idiom of his own country, inclined to 'treat them rough,' as witness his somewhat annoying habit of stringing adjectives together into one cumbrous, often at first sight unintelligible, word. At other times he drives his sentences home with sledgehammer force; at others he uses images whose aptness lingers in the memory, as when he describes himself as hacking his way 'through the dark magnificent thicket of the Russian language.'

In all Countries, frankly scrappy both in content and form, has nevertheless the trenchant qualities of good journalism.

Readers of Mr. B. Traven's *The Death Ship* will find in his latest novel, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, a story with a different setting, yet one that has the same direct method of attack which characterised his earlier book. For this tale of gold prospecting on the Mexican border has the same aloofness of manner and owes much of its power to hold attention to an under-statement and restraint that are all the more effective when it is remembered that it is based on personal experience. This is a good story, packed with adventure, convincingly told, through which the compulsion, the wickedness, the cynical cunning of the lust for gold runs like a vivid yellow streak.

It is something of a relief to turn from all these far places and strenuous happenings to the quiet, attractive pages of Professor A. E. Richardson's *The Old Inns of England*, a book which its sponsors claim is the first pictorial survey of a great national heritage to be published at a moderate price. How admirably the author and his illustrators have done their work of affection and interest can only be fairly judged by a leisurely study of both text and pictures. Every user of our English roads—and who is not nowadays, whether afoot, by car, or motor-coach?—will delight in what is not only a most practical handbook for the traveller but is as well a fascinating storehouse of information, literary, historical and curious. Only those who regard the roads just as a means of transit from town to town have, on Professor Richardson's own showing, no business to read the book beyond its opening paragraphs. If, however, you are of the growing company of the elect who 'would rather have a quick one leaning against a bar, with your feet on a sawdust floor, than sitting on a hard fake-Tudor chair, at a shiny fake-Plantagenet table, with a disinfected fake-marble floor beneath you and a spiky palm above your head: if you are the sort of person who does not get shown into the parlour as soon as you enter a village alehouse: then this book is intended for you.'

Inns also have their appropriate place and literary associations in *The Memoirs of a Bookman* by Mr. James Milne whose article on *A Library of To-day* appears on pp. 441-9 of this number. In his 'memory vignette' of George Meredith on his eightieth birthday he writes of the Inn at Burford to which the guests on this auspicious occasion were bidden to 'take a seat as at' Meredith's 'table,' and recalls how Stevenson described it and the old Hawes Inn at

Queensferry as two of the 'spots which abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable.' This is but one of the many pleasant recollections that crowd Mr. Milne's pages as he surveys the English literary world from the later years of Queen Victoria to 'these Georgian times.' Great names, great figures people this charming book, living again in the hands of one who knew and worked among them and has by this illuminating contribution to their memory linked his own name with the glory that is theirs.

Of the making of anthologies there is no end. Yet everyone should welcome the selection made by Mr. Maurice Wollman in *Modern Poetry*. The aim of this well-produced, handy little volume is to represent the poetry of the last dozen years, which, as well as certain self-imposed exclusions, accounts for the omission of some names one might expect to find. The 'principle of not including extracts from long poems' which 'has been observed with only four exceptions' is to be highly commended.

Two recently published translations of considerable interest, if possibly of somewhat specialised appeal, are those of the late Jacob Wassermann's *The Goose-Man* and Count Hermann Keyserling's *Problems of Personal Life*.

The novel by the popular German author, with its more than five hundred pages, its leisurely manner, and its crowded canvas, may seem to some, in its present version, to be too slow in action, too exhaustive in detail, for English taste. Reading it one is reminded of certain German films, for it contains much picturesque description that suggests camera-angles, as well as skilful cutting from scene to scene, from episode to episode, through which the story of the struggles, hardships and love-affairs of a young musician in the Nuremberg of the late nineteenth century unfolds against a background of politics, art, music and petty civic disputes essentially characteristic of the country and the time.

The volume by the distinguished author-traveller, Count Keyserling, originally written in French as *La Vie Intime*, is intended as an introduction to his longer works of which the essays composing it are designed as an application of the general ideas previously set forth to particular and intimate problems. His range of subjects is a wide one, covering Health, Property, Family Life, Marriage, Progress, Creativeness, and Reason and Religion, and the author tells us that the section on *Marriage* is in a much more advanced state of thought than that in which he wrote his earlier *Book of Marriage*. Those interested in the academic study of this

and so many other 'problems' common to humanity will doubtless find in these erudite and thoughtful pages a strong incentive to peruse those other books of his to which Count Keyserling so pointedly refers.

The drab atmosphere of life in one of the poorer London suburbs is admirably suggested in Mr. H. V. H. Hedges's *Suburban Saga*. The daily struggle to make ends meet and to keep up appearances, the envy which grows up inevitably in the hearts of servantless housewives for their more fortunate neighbours—all are set out in a most convincing way, and the book is saved from dullness by some really dramatic episodes and some excellent descriptive writing. To some readers it may seem unlikely that a woman of the heroine's character and charm should surrender to the sordid adventure which, for a time, estranges her from her husband. Yet regarded as a whole this first novel is not only well planned but is in many places written with real distinction.

Though *Elizabeth* is the titular heroine of Mr. Frank Swinnerton's latest novel, it is Eliza, her less fortunate and unprepossessing foil, who most closely rivets attention in this finely studied story of contrasted character and jealousy. It is a dramatic tale despite its quiet background of a slowly developing seaside town, in which all the author's practised skill as a story-teller is utilised to build up an absorbing chronicle. The book covers a long period, but time is Mr. Swinnerton's slave and we are only conscious of the passing of years when we realise at the end that those who were introduced to us as children have grown up as naturally and inevitably as they would in real life. An interesting book both as a novel and a theme, and one that will add to the author's already big reputation.

And so to a book entirely about children, daintily produced and charmingly told. Much hyperbole has already been used about Miss Eiluned Lewis's work and it is unfair to her to compare her to Kenneth Grahame: *Dew on the Grass* has nothing of the playful erudition and poetic philosophy and little of the delightful wit that have made *The Golden Age* a perpetual joy, but it is a delicate and loving study of a group of children living some years ago in an old farmhouse in Wales; it is written with simplicity and an understanding memory that has recaptured nursery days and ways, and it thoroughly deserves wide popularity.

M. E. N.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 132.

THE Editor of the CORNHILL offers two prizes of books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue, to the two solvers of the Literary Acrostic, below, whose letters are opened first. Answers must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must contain the *Coupon* from page ix of the preliminary pages of this issue. They must reach the Editor by the 20th October.

Great Men have been among us : ——— that ———
And tongues that utter'd wisdom—better none :

1. Twenty years hence, though it may ———
That I be call'd to take a nap
2. Rose leaves when the rose is dead
——— heap'd for the belovèd's bed ;
3. What the mighty Love has done ;
Fear example and be wise :
Fair Callisto was a ——— ;
4. The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
From kissing cymbals made a merry ———
5. No song but ——— dirges
Like the west wind through a ruin'd cell.

Answer to Acrostic 130: Proem : 'What dread grasp Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?' (William Blake : 'The Tiger'). 1. *Dying* (Walter Scott : 'Patriotism'). 2. *Remote* (Shelley : 'Hellas'). 3. *Euphelia* (Matthew Prior : 'Song'). 4. *Albatross* (Coleridge : 'The Ancient Mariner'). 5. *DeeP* (Keats : 'Ode to a Nightingale').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss E. Dowdeswell, St. Anne's, Verwood, Dorset, and Miss Holmes, Heatherlea, Rothbury. These two solvers are invited to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue.

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